

**THE UNDERGROUND**

---

**RAILROAD**

---

M. L.

2-22

III

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 02516 4820

Gc 977.2 C64H

COCKRUM, WILLIAM MONROE,  
1837-1924.

HISTORY OF THE UNDERGROUND  
RAILROAD . . .

MAP 2 (cont)



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016

[https://archive.org/details/historyofundergr00cock\\_0](https://archive.org/details/historyofundergr00cock_0)



COL. WM. M. COCKRUM.

# HISTORY

of the

# UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

AS IT WAS CONDUCTED BY  
THE ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

INCLUDING

Many Thrilling Encounters Between Those Aiding  
the Slaves to Escape and Those Trying  
to Recapture Them

---

BY

COL. WILLIAM M. COCKRUM  
Author of a "Pioneer History of Indiana"  
OAKLAND CITY, INDIANA

---

PRESS OF  
J. W. COCKRUM PRINTING COMPANY  
Oakland City, Indiana

---

---

Entered according to an Act of Congress in  
the year 1915

By WILLIAM M. COCKRUM  
in the office of the Librarian of Congress,  
at Washington, D. C.

---

---

*ALL RIGHTS RESERVED*

Allen County Public Library  
900 Webster Street  
PO Box 2270  
Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

Benton 2.80

**889508**

This book is dedicated to the memory  
of Col. James W. Cockrum (the author's  
father), Dr. John W. Posey, Dr. Andrew  
Lewis, Ira Caswell, and George W. Hill,  
five brave, true-hearted men who gave of  
their time and means unstintingly to  
help liberate the lowly slave.

## FOREWORD.

In writing a history of the so-called Underground Railroad, the author is controlled by a desire to be just to the anti-slavery people who were aiding the slaves to gain their freedom, and to the pro-slavery people who were hunting for runaway slaves to return them to their masters, all of whom were active in this work in all the country bordering on the Ohio river during the early fifties. In no case has he given the right names of persons where their actions might be construed by their living relatives as reflecting unfavorably on their characters.

The data for this work were secured by the personal experiences of the author, working with the superintendent of the Anti-Slavery League, who had charge of this work here. Also from data gathered from many persons who were connected with the work. This has never been in print before except some articles which the author used in his Pioneer History of Indiana, and which properly belong in this work. For many years the author has been waiting for some one more competent to do this work. A few years more, and all this data would have gone the way that

so much of the early history of our country has gone.

The author has no apology to make in the publication of this book. He thinks it right that the young people should know how things were carried on during the fifties by the pro-slavery people who had control of the government. The anti-slavery people would not have organized the Anti-Slavery League, if the people of the South had not caused a law to be spread on the statutes of the United States that gave them domineering privileges over the North. These unusual privileges were taken advantage of by many men all over this country who attempted to, and did kidnap, thousands of free negroes and sold them into slavery. Just think of a swaggering bully coming up to people who were engaged with their own affairs, and saying: "I have some fugitive slaves that are hidden in this section and I want you to help me catch them." If the man wanted to beg off, this bully would say, "If you refuse, I will have you arrested for not obeying the law and for aiding fugitive slaves to escape." This bullying, overbearing behavior of the southern men, seemed to have been catching. The local slave catchers and kidnappers of this section tried to ape the southerner and in many cases went much

farther in their boastful, threatening way. This was kept up until they were given an object lesson that taught them that others could play the kidnapping game as well as they, and the Anti-Slavery League did kidnap ten of them and gave them a lesson that they did not forget as long as they lived.

In submitting this work to the public the author wishes here to acknowledge his indebtedness to those who aided him in securing data for its completion. The names of those giving the most valued assistance are hereby given:

John T. Hanover, known in this work as John Hansen, for a copy of the Organization of the Anti-Slavery League.

Col. J. W. Cockrum for data.

John W. Barrett for data.

Dr. Logan Esarey for many favors.

Ira Caswell for data.

Dr. John W. Posey for data about the kidnapping of free negroes.

Dr. J. R. Adams for data.

Mrs. Ella C. Wheatley for valuable assistance.

Rev. John E. Cox for assistance.

George W. Hill for data.

Dr. George C. Mason for valuable suggestions.

L. O. Emerson for the data of the two Munday boys gaining their freedom.

Rev. Eldridge Hopkins for data.

C. C. Caswell for a fine picture of his father.

J. W. Lewis for a fine picture of his father.

Mrs. Hannah M. Womac for a picture of her former husband, George W. Hill.

Robert Hawthorne for data.

W. D. Crow for suggestions.



Map of the Underground Railroad in Indiana.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

---

### Chapter I

In all the territory of the free states adjacent to the borders of the slave states during the time after the passage of the last fugitive slave law of 1850 up to the commencement of the civil war, there was great excitement between those having pro and anti slavery views. This was eminently true along the southern borders of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. Slaves being regarded as personal property, "things" not human beings as the old Roman law was pleased to put it, the right of the master to reclaim his property had always been accepted as a reasonable consequence.

The fugitive slave law of 1793 was similar to the agreement made in 1787, when the compact was accepted to forever exclude slavery from the states that would be formed out of the northwest territory, except that the act of 1793 provided for the reclamation of fugitives from justice as well as from service. It was accepted by all as a just law, permitting the owners of slaves to reclaim their property.

The fugitive slave law that was passed in

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

1850 the provisions of which were drafted by Senator Mason of Virginia who was among the foremost of the southern "Fire-eaters" in his hatred of the north (and he injected everything into that measure which he felt would be galling to the abolitionists), gave the slave holders, or those hunting their runaway slaves, the power to organize a posse at any point in the United States to aid them in running down their negroes.

There was a great impetus given to fugitive slave hunting in all the free states bordering on slave states and far into New England. The favored provisions that the south had received by that law were taken advantage of by many men who never had owned a slave or been in a slave state.

Kidnapping the negroes was accomplished by running them away from their acquaintances to a friendly commissioner, probably a partner in the business, and there the kidnapper secured his right to the negro by a judicial decision of the villainous commissioner who received from the United States ten dollars for every decision he made against the negro and but five if he made one for the negro; thus offering the Commissioner a bribe of five dollars for a favorable decision in the interest of the kidnapper. The negro was thus doomed and taken south and sold into slavery. The

## ORGANIZATION ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

harsh and humiliating provisions of that law seemed to have imbued the southern men with an extra touch of their imaginary superiority. This was carried so far that when the war came on, their recruiting officers, when raising troops for the confederate army, boastingly said—"One southern soldier on the battle-field will be equal to five Yankees."

Many of the provisions of the act of 1850 were without a doubt unconstitutional.

The constitution of the United States expressly provides that—"in suits at common law where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars the right to a trial by jury shall be preserved." The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 provided for the delivery of fugitives from slavery without allowing them the trial by jury. Section Six of that law says that—"In no trial or hearing under this act shall the testimony of such alleged fugitives be admitted in evidence." The first negro arrested and tried before a United States commissioner in Indiana was a free negro man. The Commissioner decided against him but when taken to the slave owner for whom he was arrested the man was honest enough to declare he had never seen the negro before. The law was further very severe as it imposed a fine of one thousand dollars and imprisonment on anyone harboring

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

or in any way aiding fugitives in escaping. Unfortunately for justice the United States Courts of that period were organized so favorably to the interests of the owners of slaves that a very small incident would be construed as aiding and harboring.

In southern Indiana at an early day, four-fifths of the people were in sympathy with slavery. The greater portion of them had moved to Indiana from slave states and had been raised to regard the rights of the slave owner to his slave as sacred as his rights to his horses, cattle or any other property. It was but natural that law abiding people would have just such a regard for the law that they had been taught to obey. Slavery had existed in all the settled sections in the Northwest Territory for many years before Indiana Territory was organized and at the time of the passage of the fugitive slave law in 1850 there was but little open opposition to slavery. After that obnoxious law came in force so many brutal acts were committed by the kidnappers that a great change came over the people. They realized that the law was passed so that the negroes could be kidnapped and sold into slavery who were free born, and this be done under the guise of obeying the forms of law.

The Anti-Slavery League was organized so

## ORGANIZATION ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

that there might be some method of helping the slaves to escape instead of the hap-hazard way in which it was being done by the unorganized few who were helping the runaways.

This organization was in direct opposition to the laws of the United States and its members fully understood the severe penalties which would be meted out to them if they were caught in the act of violating the law. Notwithstanding this danger there were hundreds of men who were willing to engage in many enterprise which would defeat the swaggering negro hunter. The organization was made and there was all the money back of it that was needed, and it was very effective in helping large numbers of negroes to escape from slavery.

It was not long after the employees of that organization were placed on duty at the different points assigned them until so many slaves escaped into freedom, and the route they went could not be ascertained, that the slave owners said there must be an under-ground rail road under the Ohio river and on to Canada.

The Anti-Slavery League of the east had many of the shrewdest men of the Nation in its organization. They had a detective and spy system that was far superior to anything the slave holders or the United States had. There were as

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

many as fifty educated and intelligent young and middle-aged men on duty from some ways above Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, along down the Ohio on both sides of it to the Mississippi River. These men had different occupations. Some were book agents and other sorts of agents; some were singing teachers, school teachers, writing teachers and others map makers, carrying surveying and drawing outfits for that purpose; others were clock tinkers; some were real Yankee peddlers; some were naturalists and geologists carrying their hammers and nets for that purpose. They belonged to any and all sorts of occupations and professions that gave them the best opportunity to become acquainted and mix with the people and gain a knowledge of the traveled ways of the country. They never engaged in political arguments making it a point always to acquiesce with the sentiment of the majority of the people they were associating with. There were ten young men who were carried on the rolls of the anti-slavery league who took upon themselves the role of a spy. These spies were loud in their pro-slavery talk and were in full fellow-ship with those who were in favor of slavery. In this way they learned the movements of those who aided the slave masters in hunting their runaways and were enabled often to put them on the wrong track

## ORGANIZATION ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

thus helping those who were piloting the runaways to place them beyond the chance of recapture. There was also a superintendent for each of the four states, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania who had the management of the men working in the state that he was assigned to. The man who superintended Indiana was named J. T. Hanover but was known to us by the name of John Hansen. While he was doing this work he was for two or three days every two weeks at my father's house where he boarded off and on for five years. He was a naturalist and one time was near what is known as Snakey Point now on the Evansville and Indianapolis Railroad, two and a half miles northeast of Oakland City. Seeing a snake of a peculiar specie he caught it with a pair of circle nippers he had for that purpose but when putting it into a cage was bitten through the thick part of the right hand and remained at my father's house for two and a half months under the care of Dr. Samuel McCullough. He came very near dying from the effects of that poison. During the time he was there much of his mail accumulated at Princeton. The writer was sent there several times for it and answered many letters for him; in fact, the last month and a half I did all his correspondance; my father and Hansen consulted about my doing this work for him when

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

he said he was willing to risk it as we would be as deep in the mud as he was in the mire. During the time he was lying there sick, young men came there to see him from Princeton, Boonville, Petersburg and many other places. These men were all in the employ of the anti-slavery league. The author is yet in possession of a diary kept by Hansen during that period, also a key which was used by Hansen in making his report. Without this key nothing in the work could be unraveled.

Hansen was working and traveling over the first three or four tiers of counties all along the southern borders of Indiana and pretended to be representing an eastern real-estate firm from which he received large packages of mail at many of the county seats and large towns all along southern Indiana. The young men assigned to do this hazardous work under him were men who could be depended upon to do it in a way that no suspicion of their real mission would be had. They were under a most perfect discipline, similar to that the secret service men were under during the war times in the sixties. There was a code used that each man was thoroughly acquainted with. It had their numbers and all that was said or done about him was by number, which numbers were referred to as numbers of land, towns, ranges and sections and by acres when the numbers were



JOHN HANSEN.  
Superintendent of the Anti-Slavery League.



## ORGANIZATION ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

above thirty-six. The routes these men were on were called by the names of timber, such as linden, oak, maple, hickory, walnut, dogwood, sassafras, beech and all the sorts of timber that were native of the country in which they worked.

There were many places that runaway negroes crossed the Ohio river from Kentucky into Indiana. I shall not attempt to give a description of any of the routes on the other border states, for the only one who knew anything about this work that I became acquainted with was the superintendent of the Indiana division. I shall name the most used routes commencing above the mouth of the Wabash River on the Ohio and on up to the neighborhood of Cincinnati. The most difficult problem that the slave had to solve was how to cross the Ohio river, and to make that proposition easy it was agreed that there should be several places located along that river where the negro could be crossed in boats and skiffs belonging to the anti-slavery league.

At Diamond Island near West Franklin, Posey County, many runaway slaves were helped over the river and were taken over two routes. One route was to cross the Wabash river at Webb's Ferry near the southern line of Gibson County, Indiana and then on up along the Wabash or near it in Illinois to a friendly rendezvous where they

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

met friends who carried them on farther north, to a point near Lake Michigan either in Lake, Porter or LaPorte Counties. Here there was a place in each county where they were secreted and smuggled on board a lumber bark that the anti-slavery people owned and that was manned by an anti-slavery crew. This boat was very unpretentious to look at but was built for strength and speed. Anyone not acquainted would think the boat would not dare venture five miles from shore. The boat cruised along the shore landing at different points in the three counties, loading and unloading freight as was offered them but carrying no passengers. The negroes were kept secreted in the holds until a number were gathered together and then taken along the Michigan shore on up into Canada.

The other route from Diamond Island was to a point in Vanderburg county then known as the Calvert neighborhood, thence north to the various rendezvous until at one of the gathering places near Lake Michigan. Near the city of Evansville was another place where the runaways crossed. This was a very popular route as there were many free negroes in the city among whom the refugees could be easily hidden.

This work was done at night by fishermen who supplied fish to the market. These two men

## ORGANIZATION ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

with the fish boat were in the employ of the anti-slavery league. No doubt there are old people of the city of Evansville who can yet remember two young men who sold fish in their market during the early fifties who were men of literary attainments. The refugees who crossed by this route were placed in the hands of one of the anti-slavery league's pilots or guides and were taken by them along different routes to places where the negroes had friends who carried them farther north, turning them over to other friends until they arrived at one of the points near Lake Michigan.

The third route which was controlled by these people was a short distance above the mouth of Little Pigeon. There was a crossing here by skiffs and the refugees were carried to a point and turned over to friends between Boonville and Lynnhvllle in Warrick county, Indiana, and thence north to my father's big barn cellar situated on my father's farm now in the center of Oakland City, Indiana, remaining there one day, and then at night they were taken to Dr. John W. Posey's coal bank near Petersburg, Indiana. From there they were sent north to friends in Davies and Green county and then on to other friends and finally up to Lake Michigan. When there were only one or two of these fugitives they would be kept in our cellar or Dr. Posey's coal bank until

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

more could come, when they would be piloted farther north.

The fourth place for crossing the Ohio river was at a point midway between Owensboro, Kentucky, and Rockport, Indiana. There used to be a little fisherman's hut on the south bank of the Ohio river at this point and two men who put in much of their time fishing, lived in that shack. They sold their catch to steam boats, flat boats and coal fleets passing down the river and made good money in the trade this way. The real business of the men was to carry refugees that were brought to their shack at night, across the Ohio river. Then one of them piloted the negroes to a point where they were put in charge of friends who carried them to freedom. A few miles east of Rockport, Ind., many refugees were crossed over the Ohio river.

The next regular crossing place was near the mouth of Indian Creek in Harrison county. These refugees were ferried across, then conveyed to friends near Corydon who carried them farther north across Washington, corner of Jackson into Jennings, then through Decatur, Rush and Fayette counties, into Wayne where they had an innumerable host of friends among the Quakers. They were then piloted through Western Ohio and on to Lake Erie and a rendezvous where the

## ORGANIZATION ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

anti-slavery people owned another lumber shack that they were put on board of; and when a sufficient number had been gotten together they were carried to a point in Canada. There were probably more negroes crossed over the Ohio river at two or three places in front of Louisville than any place else from the mouth of the Wabash to Cincinnati. The reason for this was that the three good sized cities at the Falls furnished a good hiding place for the runaways among the colored people. Those crossing at these places were all conveyed to Wayne county, Indiana, and thence on to the Lake.

Probably in Wayne county, Indiana, the fugitives had more friends among the large community of Quakers who lived in that district than anywhere else and it was a common saying by those losing slaves, that if they got to Wayne county the prospect of finding them was very remote. It is said that the old house built by Levi Coffin and now owned by Maj. Lacey, Fountain City, Indiana, has furnished shelter for ten thousand runaway negroes.

From the early fifties until the war came on there were many persons who were in sympathy with the fugitive negroes who were regarded as strong pro-slavery in principle and this was the

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

main reason why so many negroes eluded those who tried to capture them.

The soldiers from many parts of Indiana were very much divided in their opinion on the slavery question the first two years of the war. When it was first talked about raising negro soldiers, many loud and deep curses were heard against the administration for such actions. Many officers resigned and left the army at about that time who were influenced in taking that step by the emancipation proclamation and the arming of the negro soldiers.

From the middle of 1863 until the close the serious and business part of the war came on. The hardest campaigns and severest battles were engaged in. This in a great measure cured all the grumbling. The soldiers by this time were willing and ready for any and all kinds of help and from any source to put the rebellion down. Ninety-nine per-cent of them returned home cured of the prejudice they formerly had against the negro and abolitionists. There are quite a few at this late date when the destruction of slavery is regarded as the greatest achievement of the nineteenth century, who question the actions of those who aided slaves to gain their liberty. Fortunately for our state, they are few.

The most hazardous work done by the em-

## ORGANIZATION ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

ployees of the anti-slavery league was on the south side of the Ohio river, and in many cases far to the south. This work was very dangerous and none but those who were regarded as the most careful men were sent into that section and only those who volunteered to go. They took up many occupations such as would bring them in contact with the negroes. There were regular pack peddlers carrying a large leather pack on their back with compartments in it that would contain cheap jewelry, bright colored ribbons and many other articles of wearing apparel, and a line of pocket cutlery and ornaments as would please the slaves and at such a price as would enable them to purchase. They also carried fine linen and nice dress goods, ribbons, lace and fine handkerchiefs, which were shown to the white people where they always went first, asking the master of the house, if he were there, if not, the mistress, for permission to show his goods to the slaves, usually presenting the lady of the house with some fine handkerchief or lace. These young men were clean, intelligent and cultured. They had no difficulty in getting into the best houses always agreeing with the family in politics. These peddlers carried their goods over a large scope of country, and usually every three or four weeks would go over the same ground . In this way they became well acquainted

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

with the white and colored people and with the roads, creeks and rivers in the territory they were working. After gaining thorough knowledge they would select an intelligent negro and approach him on the subject of gaining his freedom (the northern soldiers were not the first to learn that a secret intrusted to a negro of this character was never revealed.) Finally it was suggested that the negro work for the peddler for pay, by going after night to those likely to be glad of an opportunity of escaping from bondage and talking to them on that subject. It was known for many years before the negroes were emancipated that notwithstanding the patrol that was kept up in the slave states, negroes would travel at night over a large territory of country and always be back home in the morning. They had a secret way of communicating to each other which was not known to their masters.

In a short time this negro, selected by the peddler would have two or three ready to take the chance of gaining their freedom. They perhaps lived several miles away from the neighborhood this negro lived in. The time and place to meet would be agreed on; the peddler would have an accomplice on hand at the meeting place whom the runaway would be placed in charge of and then hurried to one of the crossing places on the Ohio;

## ORGANIZATION ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

then as far from the river as possible before the people were up and about. The negroes would be hidden in a dense thicket or in a barn of some friend and fed there until night came, when they were piloted farther north.

The next morning when it was found that the negroes were not on hand, there would be a great commotion and everybody, the negroes included, would be scurrying over the country to find them; the peddler as busy as any of them hunting for a clue. In this way nearly a day would be spent. Then the master or someone he hired would start out to find them. They very seldom found any clue and if they did the negroes would be half way across the state before the slave hunter got started after him. The negro in the employ of the peddler would the next time do his work in another direction and secure two or three more and have them meet the pilot and thus on to liberty. After things had quieted down probably the negro who had brought about the liberation of ten or fifteen of his people would with his wife and children take the same underground trip in the same way and gain his freedom.

Some of these agents understood geology and mineralogy and carried many kinds of instruments for testing the minerals in the earth claiming to have a mineral rod which would tell of the

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

presence of gold, silver, copper or lead.

One of these men went to a neighborhood in Kentucky not far from Green river and was hunting over the country, as he claimed, for a place where the Indians in an early day procured large quantities of lead, claiming that his grandfather had been a prisoner among the Indians for a long time and during that period went several times to a lead mine with the Indians and had noted down a description of the territory, describing some peculiar rock formations and noted that the lead mine was only a few hundred feet from the rocks described.

This mineralogist went to a gentleman living in the neighborhood and applied for board for the time he would be working in that section telling the gentleman his business, explaining to him his grandfather's statement about the lead mine and showing him a very old looking paper on which the peculiar rock formation was minutely described. The host said that he knew where the place was and the next morning they started out together for the point not more than two miles away. First, going to the owner of the land they asked his permission to examine the rock formations that the old chart so minutely described, which permission was readily given. The owner went along with the two men. After getting to

## ORGANIZATION ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

the point they decided that without a doubt the description was of that place. The mineralogist asked permission to hunt for the lode and made an agreement that if he found the lead mine the owner would give him one-fourth interest in it. He soon went to work, the owner furnishing several negroes to dig for him. They dug up a large territory and finally decided that they would not work any longer at it for the present. The mineralogist said he would go back home and look over all the papers that were his grandfather's and see if he could not find other evidence more particularly locating the lode. Within two or three months after this as many as forty negroes left that neighborhood. They went two and three at a time and the surrounding neighborhood lost several negroes who were no doubt on the same under-ground railroad. The owners never could find the least clue as to where they went.

The last of November 1861, the writer with his regiment was marching on the east side of Green river en route for Calhoun, Kentucky, where General T. L. Crittenden was located with a division of the federal army, watching the movements of Gen. Sidney A. Johnson, who was then at Bowling Green, Kentucky, in command of the confederate army at that place. Late one evening after passing a large farm and coming up to a

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

fine country residence, a man, probably fifty years old, was standing in his yard using the most violent denunciations against the soldiers and all Yankees in general. The Colonel commanding the regiment left the Adjutant opposite the house with orders as soon as the rear guard came up to arrest the vicious man and bring him along with them to the place where the regiment intended camping. This was done and that night the Colonel went to the guard's quarters to find out what was the cause of the Kentuckians violent language. He told the Colonel that he hated the name of "Yankee" and that he would rather be dead than see their hated soldiers on his plantation; that five or six years before that time, a Yankee mineralogist had received his permission to prospect for lead on his farm; that the villain had papers describing a section of country in that neighborhood and particularly described just such a rock formation as was on his land. After working two months he decided he could not find the lead and went away and in less than eight weeks there were forty three negroes who ran away from that section of the state, eight of them were his property being all he had except two old crippled ones and he had never found any clue as to where they went.

## CHAPTER II

---

### JERRY SULLIVAN'S RAID AT THE OLD DONGOLA BRIDGE

In 1851 Mr. Andrew Adkins came across the Patoka river at Dongola to see my father. It was late in the summer and the farm work was nearly all done as we were just cutting our fence corners. My father was not at home and Mr. Adkins remained until after dinner to see him. There were three hands beside myself at work on the farm. As Mr. Adkins was coming over that morning two men from near Kirk's Mills, now called Bovine, overtook and rode to the bridge with him. They showed him a flaming hand bill giving a description of seven runaway negroes and offering a reward of one thousand dollars for their capture. They informed Mr. Adkins that they, with some others, intended to watch the bridge that night and invited him to assist them, offering to share the reward with him if they got the negroes.

Mr. Adkins was very anxious for fear they would catch the negroes and while we were resting after dinner he so expressed himself to the

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

hands. At that time we had a discharged soldier of the regular army named Jerry Sullivan working for us. In the talk Sullivan asked why it would not be a good plan to rout the bridge watchers. This Mr. Adkins thought would be a good thing to do but the fugitive slave law gave the men the lawful right to catch them and the courts in this country were so organized that it was dangerous business to try to hinder anyone from recapturing the slaves. Those capturing them for the reward had the same rights under the law as the master had. Sullivan was a full fledged abolitionist and said—"Fugitive slave law to the winds, just give me a chance and I will clean out that bridge watching gang in good shape." Mr. Adkins had the will but he did not dare go into the conspiracy as the two men who offered to divide the reward with him were neighbors of his, and if it was found he was in the scrape they would cause him to pay a heavy fine.

Sullivan was very anxious to get after them and consulted us about going with him. Finally it was agreed that we would all pretend to go fishing late that evening and put out a trot line and stay until late in the night. Mr. Adkins agreed that he would go home and send his younger brother, Pinkston Adkins and Hiram Knight, a neighbor boy, late in the evening to go with us.

### JERRY SULLIVAN'S RAID

Before he would agree to do anything he made us promise not to kill any one and that we must not injure the horses of the men guarding the bridge. After we made these promises he said he would see Basil Simpson who lived on the bluff but a little way west of the bridge and who was thoroughly in sympathy with the anti-slavery people, and ask him to watch where the men put their horses. When the two boys came over late in the evening they were to remain near Mr. Simpson's until the watchers had gotten to the bridge and had hidden their horses, then they would come on to the agreed rendezvous which was about one mile south of the bridge. After these arrangements were made Mr. Adkins went home thinking we would not do anything more desperate than turning their horses loose and driving them away so they would not find them for some days.

Finally, my father came home and we got his consent to go to the river fishing. Sullivan got a number of old newspapers and rubbed wet powder over them leaving it in lumps so that it would flash when it was burning and make a regular flambeau. He dried the paper in the sun and then took a lot of fuse which had been used in blasting stumps. Taking a good supply of flax strings which we made for the purpose he made six large broches out of the newspapers.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

We had plenty of horses and about sundown we took our trot line and guns and started for the river. When we arrived at the meeting place we had to wait until a little after dark, when the two boys came mounted and armed for the fun. As Sullivan had been a soldier and was much older than any of the rest it was unanimously agreed that he should have full command and we would do as he directed.

Mr. Simpson and the two Pike county boys had located the horses in a patch of small saplings. As I now recollect it they were less than one hundred yards southwest of the Dongola coal mine shaft and there were seven of them. The two Kirk's Mill men told Mr. Adkins there would be six and gave their names. One of them was a doctor who at that time lived in Lynnville in War-rick county. One was a hotel keeper who lived in Petersburg and another was one of his boarders. The other was a man who lived about half way from Dongola to Winslow on the north side of the river. It was never ascertained who the seventh man was. After the party had assembled, Sullivan took charge giving each a number and directed us how to form a line and put us through a lot of manoeuvres which were pure nonsense to us then but which I afterward learned were good military tactics.



THE OLD DONGOLA BRIDGE WHERE JERRY SULLIVAN MADE HIS RAID.



## JERRY SULLIVAN'S RAID

After waiting until about two hours after night, our commander got us in position, two and two and heading the cavalcade gave the command to "Forward, March." We marched on until one of the Pike county boys told our commander that we were near the place where the horses were hitched. Halting us, the commander took one of the boys and located the horses; then coming back he marched us up to a point where he wanted us to leave our horses. We dismounted, leaving one man to hold the five horses. One man mounted was stationed between the horses and the bridge to look out for the enemy.

Stripping the saddles off the bridge watchers' horses and piling them at the root of a large tree, we led them out to the road and within about two hundred yards of the bridge, when Sullivan unrolled his flambeau material and wrapped one of the broaches inside the hair of each horses tail. He securely tied them there leaving about six inches of fuse sticking out. As he had only six broaches he made another for the extra horse by cutting a strip out of a heavy saddle blanket. He rolled it very tightly putting about two thirds of a pound of powder into it and bound the strong material very tightly with the flax strings. The fuse in this case was longer than the others, as he said he wanted it to go off near the bridge.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

He lighted all the fuse then ordered us to turn the horses loose and start them down the road toward the bridge. We soon had our horses started and running after them yelling like so many wild Indians. The broaches commenced to pop and fizz at a great rate and the horses were going like the wind. In a little while the big bomb went off and I doubt if anyone ever saw such another runaway scrape where there were an equal number of horses.

They went across the bridge at top speed. When we got near the bridge, Sullivan ordered us to halt, make ready and fire, which we did. Jumping off our horses we loaded our guns. Our commander was calling aloud giving orders to an imaginary battalion to rush over the bridge and capture the villains.

About this time Tom Midcalf, who was a fearless fellow, became very much excited, jumped on his horse and ran over the bridge hallooing like a Comanche Indian. We kept up a fusilade for some time but there was no one there. The charge of the horses with the snapping and flashing of fire tied to their tails was enough to have scared the devil, let alone a few cowardly scamps who were waiting to capture a lot of poor runaway negroes trying to get away from the bonds of slavery.

All the evidence of there having been anybody

### JERRY SULLIVAN'S RAID

there was the horses and we found a bed made down above the bridge where one relief of negro hunters were no doubt lying when the horses came charging on to them. We found two pair of boots under the bed put there for the purpose of raising their heads. We also found a bushel basket in which they had their provisions. **889508**

Sullivan rolled up a lot of rocks in their bed and threw it into the river. He cut their boots into strips and threw them into the river. Then he sent three of the boys back and got the seven saddles, cut them all to pieces and threw them into the river. I don't know how far the horses ran but probably several miles.

It was believed that the men guarding the bridge were on the go before the horses crossed it and that they made good time until they got clear away for the noise made by our crowd and the running of the horses sounded like a host of men. Sullivan got us into line and escorted the Pike county boys near to their home and then we went home, arriving after midnight. Jerry Sullivan remained at my father's home several weeks after these events. When he went away he said he was going to reinlist in the army. I have often wondered what became of him. If he was in the war of the rebellion I am satisfied he made his mark.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

The oldest of our crowd except Sullivan was less than sixteen years old. Just a lot of green country boys and as I recall the scrape with such a leader we would have run headlong into anything regardless of danger. I afterward learned that the thing needed was for soldiers to have a leader who had the grit and the will and they would follow him in the jaws of death.

With the four young men named I have had many adventures and hours of pleasure. They were all brave true-hearted men, long since gone to their eternal rest.

Years afterward Mr. Adkins told me that some time after the middle of the night of the raid, there was a knock at his door. On opening it one of the Kirk's Mills men was there and said that early in the night he had a chill and was compelled to go home, that he was very thirsty and asked for a drink of water. Mr. Adkins said he was satisfied that the reason the man stopped was to find out if he was at home.

After the war was over and the negroes free, my father told me that the day Mr. Adkins was at his house waiting for his return, he was in consultation with Ira Caswell of Warrick county and Dr. Posey as how best to get the seven negroes to the north of White River without having them re-captured.

#### JERRY SULLIVAN'S RAID

The negroes at that time were safely hidden in the thick brush and tall grass in what was then known as the big pond, about two miles east of Oakland City. The pond at that time of the year was nearly dry and had a heavy growth of pond grass all over it. The runaways were kept there during that day and at night and were taken over the Patoka river at Martin's ford about one mile east of Massey's bridge and were then piloted along Sugar Creek for some distance until they came to where a wagon was in waiting for them in which they were carried to Dr. Posey's coal bank and hidden. They remained there the next day and at night were ferried across White river in skiffs and were turned over to another friend who rushed them on to Canada and freedom. When they had passed White river they were regarded as nine-tenths free.

## CHAPTER III

---

### AN ATTEMPT TO CATCH RUNAWAY NEGROES WHICH ENDED IN A DESPERATE BATTLE WITH WILD HOGS

In 1852 Joseph Stubblefield was hunting some cattle which had strayed away from John Hathaway's works on the old Wabash and Erie canal just north of the Patoka river opposite the town of Dongola. Finding that the oxen had crossed the river he followed on after them until he came to what was then known as the Hazelrough, a large body of land which had but little timber on it but was completely covered with hazel brush matted together with grape vines, running in every direction all over the top of the low bushes. At that time there were many wild hogs running at large in all this section and that large body of wild tangled brush was an ideal home for them and offered them a bountiful supply of food from September to winter when there was other mast they could get in the timber around the edges of that immense thicket. In tracking the cattle it was found they had gone to the bottoms of Buck creek which was a short distance west of the rough, where he found them and in attempting to

## BATTLE WITH WILD HOGS

drive them back they made a rush to get away by going into the edge of the rough; following on after them some distance he came to a camp with a bed of leaves that looked as if it had been recently used, as bones of animals and a piece of corn bread were found near the bed which was completely covered with grape vines and could not be seen unless one should happen on to it as Stubblefield had done. He did not understand what this meant as he had seen no one. But when he got back with the cattle he related his find to some of the men on the works and learned that it was a bed made by runaway negroes, and that a posse had been there that morning enquiring for them and had left a hand bill giving a description and offering a reward for their capture.

It was soon noised around that their hiding place had been found by Stubblefield and there was a posse organized to go back with him and capture the negroes. Mr. Hathaway learned what was up and sent for Joe and interrogated him about the bed and where it was. Mr. Hathaway was a just man and believed if the poor runaways could elude their master and gain their liberty that it was right that they should do it and told Stubblefield who at that time was not more than twenty years old that he thought it wrong for him to pilot those human hounds so that they could

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

capture these poor unfortunates. Joe at once took the same view of the matter and it was arranged between them that he would do all he could to keep the men from finding the negroes by taking them to a wrong place and fool them all that he could until night would come and the negroes would then be on the way north. It was arranged that they would start about two o'clock. When the time came Stubblefield, who was equal to any emergency, pretended that he had sprained his ankle very badly and that he would have to bathe it for a while before he could go. In this way he put in as much as an hour and when he had gone some distance on the way he found that he had left his pocket book with all his money in his boarding shanty and must go back and get it.

By this time it was four o'clock and an hour later when they got to the rough at the farthest point from where he had made the find. There was at least two hundred acres of this land which was very brushy and as much as one hundred acres that was a dense thicket. The party had brought five dogs with them and the leader of the posse was named Bev Willis, who owned a boat that was in the river at Dongola where he supplied the thirsty with Patoka water and whisky mixed. He was the owner of a very large white

## BATTLE WITH WILD HOGS

bull dog which was a great favorite with all when he was muzzled.

Another one of the posse was Pat McDermitt who was one of Hathaway's bosses. He borrowed a large Newfoundland dog from his boarding boss and there were three common dogs along that were of no special value.

All told there were five men beside Stubblefield in the party all armed with some sort of a weapon. When they got to the rough, Mr. Stubblefield said that in there not more than thirty feet from the post oak tree was where the bed was made. It was so thick that it was impossible to ride in anywhere.

McDermitt, who was a dare-devil said he would go in and see what he could find. Taking his big dog along, he started to creep in under the tangle but had not gone far before he came to a nest of young pigs. One of the little dogs following him caught one of the pigs and it set up a great cry. In a minute the old mother was on hand charging the dog that was barking at her family. The white bull dog went to the aid of his brother and soon caught the sow by one of her ears when she commenced to squeal and in less than a minute hogs were heard coming from every direction. They charged the white dog who, with bull dog pluck held his hold on the sow's ear.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Finally a large male hog cut the dog open with one of his tusks . By this time there was an awful uproar, dogs barking, hogs rallying and men yelling. McDermitt's big dog caught a pig. This brought the battle on him and in a moment he was surrounded with savage hogs. The continued battle had brought the hogs and dogs near to the edge of the thicket. McDermitt intending to save his dog, ran his horse up to where he was and tried to catch him by a collar which was around his neck and bring him out.

A large hog hamstrung his horse which threw McDermitt and before he could get away was tusked to the bone in several places in both legs. The other men fought the hogs back with their guns and secured their wounded companion. This ended the negro hunt. One man was cut to pieces and ruined for life, two valuable dogs killed and a horse so injured he had to be killed. After this the party concluded they had not lost any negroes and were glad to get back home.

Isaac Street who had laid out and plotted the town of Dongola was a very quiet old Quaker and thoroughly in sympathy with the anti-slavery party. He and his good wife, Aunt Rachel, had many times fed and secreted the poor negroes as they were making their way to the North and liberty. They had knowledge of where the ne-

## BATTLE WITH WILD HOGS

groes were secreted in the thicket and while Stubblefield was dilly-dallying time away before he went to pilot the posse to the field of carnage, Mr. Street learned of the proposed raid and with the aid of another man who was in sympathy with the negroes, took them from their hiding place under a small load of straw to his barn and that night carried them to the north of White river and delivered them over to a friend.

Thirty years after the events just recorded, in conversation with Mr. Stubblefield about his hog battle, he said that his life had been sweet to him although he had undergone many hardships and misfortunes, but in all his life there was never any one thing that he had always so thoroughly enjoyed as he did seeing those roaring negro hunters defeated and routed.

## CHAPTER IV

---

### IRA CASWELL BRINGS THREE NEGROES TO MY FATHER

Early one morning in 1852 Ira Caswell ,of Warrick county, came to our house and had three negro men with him. My father put them in a heavy log building that we used for a pork house. I was sent with a letter to see Dr. John W. Posey at Petersburg, asking him if he could have some friend with a conveyance to meet Mr. Caswell on the north side of the Patoka river at Martin's ford, at ten o'clock that night, to convey the negroes to Dr. Posey's coal bank. I found the doctor and delivered the letter. Dr. Posey asked me to excuse him for a short time and went out of the office; he soon returned and told me that Mr. John Stuckey would be at Martin's ford at ten o'clock that night, giving me a letter to my father to that effect.

I went to the Kinman hotel for dinner. In a short time Willis Coleman came in for his dinner. He was three years older than I was but we were good friends and made arrangements to be company for each other going home. Before dinner

#### IRA CASWELL BRINGS NEGROES

was ready a large man rode up to the hotel and was met by Mr. Kinman as if they were old friends; behind his saddle he carried a bundle of rope and three pairs of handcuffs. When he came into the office he unbuckled a belt that had a pair of pistols and laid them on a small table. He had quite a roll of hand bills that he gave to Mr. Kinman and passed some to Coleman and me. These hand bills offered a reward of three hundred dollars for three fugitive negroes. From the descriptions I knew they were the same negroes that were locked up in our pork house.

After dinner the slave hunter wanted to know if we would like to go to Winslow and help watch the bridge, saying that the slaves had crossed the Ohio river about south of Boonville and they would travel as near north as they could and that would bring them to Winslow. We told him that we would like to be in the frolic, but were in no condition for such service, and that our people would be uneasy about us.

I wanted to see Dr. Posey to tell him about the slave hunter; I asked Willis to walk with me up to the main part of the town. (I did not make a confidant of Willis but he said as soon as we got away from the hotel that he hoped the negroes would get away). We met Dr. Posey, as I now recall it, at the corner where Col. Oliphant's drug

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

store is, or was. The doctor and I stepped aside a little way and I was telling him about the slave hunter when some one came up behind me, and with both hands, crushed my hat down over my eyes and ears and I found it difficult to get my hat off. I heard a blow and a noise as if some one had fallen very heavily; by this time, with the aid of Dr. Posey, we tore the hat off, and I was just in time to see another fellow knocked flat on the ground. Willis Coleman had knocked both of them down; the first one had hit his head on a rock or some other hard substance, and it looked for a time as if he would never regain consciousness. By this time a crowd had gathered and many wanted to know what it was about. I did not know either of the men until they were washed. I then saw that they were the same two fellows who had tried to abuse me at the Onias Smith school house the year before. We went to the justice's office, I think it was Esquire Boone or Osborne, I cannot recall which. Willis Coleman was put on trial for knocking the two fellows out; the squire, after hearing the testimony of Dr. Posey and others decided that Coleman should be fined one cent in each case with the costs; the constable said that all costs were paid. I bought a hat and was ready to go.

By the time we got back to the hotel it was

## IRA CASWELL BRINGS NEGROES

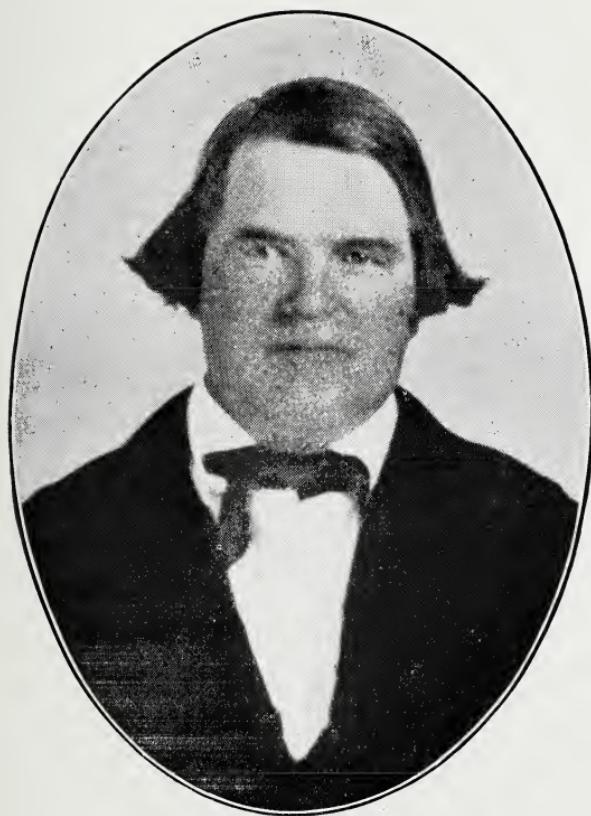
getting late in the evening. The slave hunter and Mr. Kinman were ready to start for Winslow. When we had got south of Petersburg about three miles we met three men riding very fast who asked if we had seen any strangers on the road. We told them about the slave hunter at the hotel and that he had gone to Winslow to watch the bridge there that night and gave them one of the hand bills given us.

When I got home I found that Mr. Caswell had been sick nearly all day. My father said that I would have to take the negroes. At that time we had three negro boys living with us and working on the farm—they had been left there by their guardian until they could be sent to Liberia. We got out four horses, put one of the negro men and one of the boys behind on each of three horses, I rode the other and called the dogs for a coon hunt. In this way we went to Martin's ford, crossed and found Mr. John Stuckey waiting for us a little distance away. He had a conveyance and loaded the negroes in and before day had them safely housed in Dr. John W. Posey's coal mine. The next night they were taken across White river on the aqueduct at Kinderhook and turned over to a friend in Daviess county, who sent them on farther north. I have no doubt but Dr. Posey's coal mine furnished one day's rest for a thousand negroes dur-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

ing the ten years after the fugitive slave law was passed in 1850 until 1861, when the war commenced. The two young men I have been writing about belonged to a family that had drifted to Petersburg, working on the Wabash and Erie canal. They have relatives yet living in the country who are respectable people, which is the reason I do not give their names.

One night in 1854 these boys pried open the back door of Warner L. Scott's store, took such articles as they wanted and left for St. Louis, where they engaged to work for their passage as deck hands on a Missouri river steamboat. They went up the Missouri for many days and finally came to a trading station where many Indians came with furs and skins to sell. The two boys had grown tired of the trip. It was a little more dangerous than they had bargained for. The Indians had many bull boats tied to the bank near the steamboat. One night these boys stole a large bundle of beaver skins and a bull boat and started down the river. The next morning the men and the bundle of skins were missing and one of the Indian boats was gone. It belonged to six Arick-aree Indians. They secured another boat and followed; they were gone three days; when they returned they had two fresh scalps, the boat and the bundle of furs.



IRA CASWELL.

A Member of the Executive Committee of the Anti-Slavery  
League.



## CHAPTER V

---

### SLAVES ESCAPE WHILE OWNERS ARE DEEP IN SLEEP, THE RESULT OF TOO MUCH DRINKING

During the summer of 1852 there was a family of negroes named Eastman consisting of six children, father and mother, eight in all. There were three grown daughters, two small boys and one boy about 18 years old. Their Master, John Travell, died owning thirty slaves. This Eastman family at the division of the estate was given to a nephew named for his uncle who had adopted him as one of his heirs. Young Travell's home was in northeastern Kentucky. He went to Mississippi to get his negroes, (The Eastman family) and was bringing them up the Mississippi and Ohio rivers to Louisville, Kentucky. Young Travell had a bad habit that was common among young southern men of that day that of being a gambler. He had the negroes on the lower deck and had them all handcuffed together.

The second evening after starting, Travell was drinking freely and was induced to engage in a game of cards by two professional gamblers of

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Louisville. During the evening he lost all the money he had, and bet one of the negro girls against one thousand dollars. The gambler went down to the lower deck and selected the girl against whom he was to stake his money. Travell lost the girl and was going to put up another one against the one he had lost, when the Captain of the boat, who was a friend of the Travell family interfered and took young Travell to his room to sober up. The gamblers waited for Travell to sober up. By this time the boat had passed Evansville.

At Diamond Island, below Henderson, Ky., two of Hansen's anti-slavery guards came on board the boat for Cannelton, Indiana. Finding the negro family all hand cuffed together and learning the condition of things, they determined to liberate them if they could. The boat took on coal at the mine near Newburg, and was proceeding up the river for Louisville and had gone eight or ten miles when a cyclone from the southwest struck the boat and blew the smokestack down and tore the hurricane deck off, disabling the gearing machinery so she could not be steered. The river was full of timber and heavy, swelling waves. It looked as if the boat would be capsized. She finally drifted to the Indiana side and was made fast. Travell was still past getting about.

## SLAVES ESCAPE WHILE OWNERS SLEEP

Night coming on the captain told Travell that some one must be placed in charge of the negroes so that they could be loosed from the handcuffs in order to eat their meals. He told the captain to send somebody to him that he could trust. The two anti-slavery guards were the only men that were available. The captain asked one of them if he would take charge of the negroes and this he agreed to do. The captain got the keys for the handcuffs from Travell and gave them to the guard and placed him in charge of the negroes. Night soon came on and it was very dark. Near ten o'clock when everything had become quiet on the boat, the negroes were slipped ashore where they were taken in charge by the other guard. After going north for a little way they came to a road running east and west and not far from the river. Going east about one mile they came to what is now known as the Boonville and Yankeetown road. They left the road before getting to Boonville and traveled west intending to come into the neighborhood of Ira Caswell's. The party traveled all night and a little before daylight they came to a large pasture or woodland fenced in. Going into the woodland lot, they found a place to hide in a brier thicket of three or four acres. As soon as it was light enough to see, one of the guards went out to the road and soon found a man

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

splitting wood. He made inquiry of the man if he knew of anyone wanting to hire help on a farm. He also asked the man if he knew Ira Caswell. In this way he found out that their hiding place was just about one mile north of Caswell's.

The guard went to Mr. Caswell and told him of their hiding place; soon a basket of provisions was ready and taken by Mr. Caswell and the guard to their camp. It was thought best to keep the two guards until the negroes were farther away from where the stranded steamboat lay. Word was sent to George Hill and by him to my father that the negroes would be there about 4 o'clock the next morning. About that time the understood signal was heard. My father put the negroes in the barn cellar and they were there all day. At that time two of my father's Mississippi nieces were visiting him and they had a negro maid with them. During the day that the negro family was in the barn cellar this maid told a hired girl that was living with us that she was told by a negro barber at Princeton that she was free being in a free state. I told one of the guards of this and advised him to seek a chance to speak with her, which he did and she said that she would go if she had a chance. He told her that some negro girls would be in that vicinity that evening and if she would go to a place indicated

## SLAVES ESCAPE WHILE OWNERS SLEEP

she could join them. This she promised to do if she could possibly get away.

We had sent word to Dr. Posey that we would be there about 11 o'clock that night. When it got dark we had the wagons ready and the negro family was loaded. My counsin's maid was on hand and took her place with the other three girls. There were five white men, well armed, with the wagons. When we got to Dongola we halted the wagons about 100 yards from the bridge. I went to see Mr. Simpson who lived near by. He said that there were two men watching the bridge, trying to capture three runaway negroes that had escaped from Kentucky. I went back to the wagon and told George Hill and the other white men what Mr. Simpson had told me. We held a consultation and agreed to go ahead and cross the bridge even if we had to fight for it. When we got near the bridge the two men stepped out. Mr. Hill asked them what they wanted, and they replied that they wanted to know what we were loaded with. Hill told them that we were loaded with hoop poles and pumpkins and for them to step back out of the way or they would get run over. This they concluded to do and we had no further trouble. When we came near Dr. Posey's Coal Bank we met his lieutenant, John Stucky. We delivered our

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

charge to him and he said that they would be far into Davies County before day.

The next morning when my cousins found out that their maid was gone they made a great fuss. I got all the help on the farm and made a pretense of hunting for the missing maid. Finally I had to tell my dear cousins that some villainous slave hunter had kidnapped the girl and that no doubt by this time had crossed the Ohio river into Kentucky and had again sold her into slavery.

## CHAPTER VI

---

### HOW THREE RUNAWAY SLAVES WERE AS- SISTED TO FREEDOM BY THE UNDER- GROUND RAILWAY

On a raft of saw logs run out of Green river in 1854 there were four men. One of them was an overseer for the owner of the raft; the other three were very light colored mulatto slaves, who were brothers and very resolute, strong, young men. The overseer fell into the river at Spottsville, Ky., and was drowned. The three negroes tied the raft to the bank and abandoned it, determined to make an attempt to gain their freedom. They wandered up on the south bank of the Ohio river until they came to a shack where two fishermen lived, whose pretended occupation was to fish and sell their catch to passing steamboats; their real occupation, however, was to ferry runaway slaves across the Ohio river. The three runaways had lost one night and half the next day hunting for some way to cross the river before they found the fishermen's shack, and then the fishermen were afraid to cross the river with them in daylight, so they had to wait until night before they got over the river.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

A second raft that belonged to the same man was only three hours behind; when they came to the abandoned raft they tied up their raft and waited all night to see if the missing crew would not return. The next morning the two rafts were lashed together and run on to Evansville, where the alarm was given. Before the crew of the second raft left Spottsville, they found a man who said he had seen three very light colored negroes on the Ohio river bank about six miles up the river; that he had watched them for some time and they seemed to be looking carefully along the bank as if hunting for some way to cross the river. The man in charge of the rafts got on a little steamboat that ran from Evansville to Bowling Green, Ky., and returned to the home of the owner of the rafts, Mr. Thomas Irwin, on upper Green river, to report the loss. Irwin and his manager soon had two other men ready to go with them to hunt for the runaways. They had four of Irwin's best horses and two bloodhounds to track the negroes.

The next thing for the fugitive slave guides to do after taking the negroes over the river was to deliver them to the nearest Underground railroad station, which was Ira Caswell's about five miles north of Boonville, and it would require most of the night to get there. Along about the middle

## SLAVES ASSISTED TO FREEDOM

of the night they were on the main road and at a place where a hurricane had passed through many years before, blowing the large timber down, and which had grown up with brush and grape vines, making it impossible to ride through it, when they heard horses coming behind them. Stepping a little to one side they waited to see who was riding so hard. Soon four horses and men came into view; they had gone but a little beyond where the men lay, when some large animals, as colts or deer, ran through the thicket, making a loud noise. The horsemen stopped to listen; one of them said that he believed it was the negroes, and that it would be best to turn the dogs loose. Soon the dogs were on the trail of a bob cat or some other wild animal, which they treed about one hundred and fifty yards away, baying at it viciously. The men wondered what it could be. One of them suggested that they hitch their horses and let them rest, while they should go and see what it was; that it might be the negroes. This suggestion was adopted and soon they were all gone to where the dogs were making such a dreadful noise. As soon as these men were away the fugitives and their guide got to the road, mounted the horses and were soon going at a good speed; the dogs were making so much noise it is not probable that the slave hunters heard their horses leave. The

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

fugitives soon arrived at Mr. Caswell's and told him the trick they had played on the slave hunters. The anti-slavery guide went to bed, and Mr. Caswell and the three negroes started for my father's home, where they arrived about daylight. Mr. Caswell told my father the negroes and the guide had captured the horses from the men hunting for them. My father was a little doubtful about the extra horse, but the fugitives had nothing to fear, as they had no standing in law. It was decided that it would be late in the day before the slave hunters could come this far, if they should come this way.

The men and horses were fed and rested about one hour, when they were ready to go. I piloted them through the woods to the Patoka river, which we crossed near Thomas Hart's farm. The extra horse followed its mates. We found Mr. Hart and he mounted the extra horse; we rode through the woods most of the way, coming to White river not far from Wright's ferry. The negroes swam the river on their horses the extra horse following. Mr. Hart and I stood on the south bank until the negroes were away for the north at a brisk gallop.

During the year 1895 I was Indiana's resident commissioner on the Chickamauga National Military Park at Chattanooga, Tenn. While acting

## SLAVES ASSISTED TO FREEDOM

in that capacity I was selected by the National Chickamauga Park Commission to serve on a committee with Gen. John B. Turchin of Illinois, of the Union army, Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner of Kentucky and Gen. Wm. B. Bates of Tennessee, of the Confederate army, to settle a disputed point about the location of cannon ball monuments at the places where Gen. James Deshler and Gen. Benjamin Hardin Helms of the Confederate army were killed September 20, 1863. (Gen. Helms was a rebel, yet he was a brother-in-law of the greatest American, Abraham Lincoln.)

During the time I was with these gentlemen I became well acquainted with them. Knowing that Thomas Irwin lived, or had lived near the home of Gen. Buckner, I asked the general about him. He said he was well acquainted with Irwin in his life time, thought he had been dead for several years; that Irwin never heard of the three runaway negro men until after the war, when they wrote him that they sold one of the horses and rode the other three to Canada; that the body of the overseer was found as a "floater," near Henderson, with the head crushed, done, no doubt, by the three boys. The general also said, that as for Thomas Irwin, he deserved all he got, for there was no doubt but the three runaway negroes were his own children.

## CHAPTER VII

---

### KIDNAPPERS KIDNAPPED

The fugitive slave law of 1850 was so sweeping in its many provisions that every negro found in a free state was likely to be kidnapped, taken out of his neighborhood, and before a commissioner friendly to slavery, put on trial as a fugitive slave, some man in a slave state being named as his owner. The testimony of the kidnapper was all the evidence given, as the negro was not allowed to give testimony any more than a cow would be. The kidnappers became so arrogant and boastful that it was very trying to the people who believed in justice. I well remember them with their whips, handcuffs, and ropes tied to their saddles, and their pistols belted around them. They were continually riding over the country and when they would come to a field where men were working they would call them to the roadside and ask if they were opposed to slavery, and if they knew of anyone who was harboring runaway slaves. If they knew the persons they were talking to were anti-slavery they would give them an awful grilling. Of all that I saw of these gen-

## KIDNAPPERS KIDNAPPED

try, Smith Gavitt, at that time sheriff of Vanderburg county, had a deputy who was the most domineering and insulting of all of them.

One of these negro hunters at one time in Petersburg abused Thomas Hart, a peaceable man, calling him many abusive names. Hart did not want to fight him, but a stranger took it up and told the bully that he had gone too far, when the maddened brute turned on him and asked if he wanted to take it up; if so he would serve him as all negro lovers deserved to be treated. As quick as a flash the stranger knocked the bully flat on the pavement and gave him such a thumping that he had to keep his bed at Jack Kinman's hotel for ten days. The man who so thoroughly thrashed the slave hunter was an assistant civil engineer on the Wabash and Erie canal. The late Dr. J. R. Adams of Petersburg, Indiana gave me the above incident.

These boasting bullies had gone so far that it was resolved to give them a lesson in retaliation that they would remember for awhile. A secret meeting was held at my father's house at which a number of anti-slavery people were present. John Hanson, superintendent of the men working for the anti-slavery league, was in the meeting. After many suggestions, it was decided to hold a pretended meeting of "The Sons of Liberty," an

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

organization of free negroes in large northern cities at that time. The meeting was to be held in a building on a farm where a family of negroes named Booker lived, four miles south of where Oakland City now stands. The family of Bookers consisted of the brother and two sisters, all of whom were nearly as white as anyone. The brother entered into the arrangement willingly.

The house they lived in had heavy doors and were barred every night, and Booker had almost an arsenal of fire arms. They lived in fear all the time of being kidnapped. Hanson said he would give us all the aid within his power and he would have two or three of his spies help us. These spies were all well known to the slave hunters, as they were very loud publically in their claims that slavery was right and that every negro should be in bondage. By the intimate relation they had with the negro hunters most of the plans of the kidnappers were known to the anti-slavery people, and in this way they were many times thwarted in their attempt to capture runaway negroes. The spies were to tell all the negro hunters known to them that on a certain night there was to be a meeting of "The Sons of Liberty" on the Booker farm; that there would be ten or twelve free negroes besides the Bookers there and all of them could be kidnapped and taken across the Ohio

#### KIDNAPPERS KIDNAPPED

river before daylight the next morning, and then taken south and sold into slavery. They also said that there would be as much as \$1,000 for each of the men engaged in the kidnapping.

At that time there was a man living about two miles south of my father's place who had not been long from Kentucky, and who was a strong advocate of slavery. I often heard him say that all negroes should be in bondage, and that a negro had no soul and should be treated as a horse or an ox. This old bluffer was an elder in the church and was very loud in his prayers. I don't think he ever failed to say, "Oh, Lord, incline the heart of the servants to obey their masters." His home was a resting place for the men hunting for fugitive slaves. These negro hunters went to this old fellow for information about the people in this section, and he came very near causing some of our neighbors to have serious trouble by his insinuations about what they had done. The spies made arrangements for those going in the raid on "The Sons of Liberty" meeting to gather at this old Kentuckian's house.

Booker was very enthusiastic over the prospects of capturing the kidnappers. He went to Princeton and to the Cherry Grove neighborhood, three miles west of Princeton and got four stout negro men to agree to come

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

to his house the day before the raid was to be made, so that they could have everything in readiness. The building was a double log one, the two rooms each being about sixteen feet square. A wide plank seat extended across two sides of the room in which the meeting was to be held. About four feet was partitioned off one end of the room by hanging sheets across, behind which were a number of lighted candles. In the other room was an open fireplace in which a coal fire was burning. Quite a number of old rods and broken pitchforks tines were placed in the fire to be heated. Everything being in readiness, the white men present blackened their faces and hands with wet powder and took their places behind the cloth screens. They did not have long to wait before we heard them coming near the door with a rush! One of the spies led the ten men and the other brought up the rear and when all were in the room the door was closed. This being a signal for the screen to fall and the negro kidnappers found themselves looking into the muzzles of twelve rifles. Our leader ordered them to hold up their hands and sent two of the Cherry Grove negroes to disarm them. Then he had them take off their coats and vests, and handcuffed them with the same handcuffs that they had brought to manacle us with. One of the negroes, who could read, told



### THE RUNAWAY.

Picture used in hand bills and newspaper advertisements.



#### KIDNAPPERS KIDNAPPED

the negro hunters that they had broken into our lodge uninvited and that they would have to be initiated as all others who entered there had been. The following oath was read to each and repeated by them; "I solemnly swear that I will never engage in any attempt to hinder a fugitive slave from gaining his freedom and I will never attempt to or aid others kidnapping a free negro, so help me God." They were then taken into the other room two by two. The spies were first. Our leader told them so that all could hear him that he believed that they piloted the other men to our lodge and they deserved death. The spies pleaded and begged the lodge men not to kill them. There was the sound of heavy licks as if they were being beaten to death. Finally their moaning ceased. They were placed under a table with their feet sticking out so as to be in plain view of the others as they were brought into the room, two at a time. Their left shoulders and breasts were made bare and they were branded with a deep burned cross on their shoulders and over their hearts. Our leader told them that the cross was one of the emblems of our order and that he wanted them to always have a remembrance of their visit to our lodge. Their coats and vests were then burned full of holes which our leader told them was to show that among negroes poverty was no

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

disgrace. There were four of these men who had been very mean and it was desired to give them some extra trimmings. The deputy sheriff from Vanderburg county and his "yoke fellow," a Kentuckian, were always together and had been the most insulting and domineering of the people trapped. They both had very long whiskers and prided themselves on their good looks. They were ordered to stand up when one of the negroes burned their beard off as short as he could with a red hot iron! The other two who were very active in hunting fugitive slaves and kidnapping free negroes, were a hotel keeper, and one of his boarders from Petersburg. John Stuckey told our leader they were bad gamblers, so the balls of their thumbs and first fingers were seared with a red hot iron so that they could not shuffle cards for a while. There was another big fellow from Petersburg who worked in the stable (or had charge of it) for the hotel man mentioned. The old Elder and this stable boss were handcuffed together. There was in the party a doctor from Lynnville, and another who at that time lived east of Winslow—they got the cross brand; there were also caught in the trap two young men who at that time lived near Princeton. In all there were ten men, besides the spies, who wanted to kidnap the negroes and sell them into slavery.

## KIDNAPPERS KIDNAPPED

The men who caught them were John Stuckey of Petersburg, Pink Adkins and Hiram Knight, of Logan township, Pike county; George Hill, our leader, and Ira Caswell from south of Lynnville, Warrick county; Wesley Simpson, W. B. Dill, Thomas Metcalf and myself, from eastern Gibson county; the four negroes from west of Princeton and Booker, at whose house the meeting was held. The men were taken back into the room where they were captured and the middle door was closed. The two spies came to life, got their horses, and turned all the horses of the negro hunters loose and drove them several miles away. The prisoners were all turned loose and ordered to go the way they came. The spies were sent to southeastern Indiana, as they could be of no further use in this section. It was the intention to make the negro hunters believe the two men were killed. The men in disguise were perfect in their makeup; the lights were tallow candles and made a dim light. All the work was done by the four negroes, under the direction of our leader, who, to all appearances, was himself a big black negro. I believe that the negro hunters thought all the lodge people were negroes.

Some may think that the punishment inflicted on these slave hunters was cruel, but they should take into consideration the fact that these same

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

men had kidnapped negroes who were as free born as they were and sold them into slavery for life.

I doubt if there was ever such another performance in this or any other country. The only reason there was not great excitement about it was that the defeated bullies were ashamed to tell it, and we did not dare to tell it.

## CHAPTER VIII

---

### WORKINGS OF THE UNDERGROUND RAIL-WAY AND SOME ENGAGED IN THE DANGEROUS WORK

An explanation as to why we were so successful in aiding the fugitive slaves in gaining their freedom without being suspected:

My father's family was believed to be in favor of slavery. He was born and raised in the south, and two brothers owned many slaves in the state of Mississippi. His twin sister married a man that owned 500 slaves in the rich Yazoo cotton country, in Mississippi, and his slaves were freed by Lincoln's proclamation. We found it best to do but little talking during the exciting times sixty years ago, made no confidants who were not known to be earnest, true men and in sympathy with the unfortunate slave.

The dose we gave the kidnappers (explained in a former article) had a very quieting effect. They were not much in evidence for quite awhile; even the old elder did not pray so loud and long for the Lord to incline the heart of the servant to obey his master. For quite a while the men hunting for runaway slaves were mostly from

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Kentucky. About two hours before day in the early fall of 1853, loud hallooing was heard in front of our house at our front gate. My father opened the door and three men were there on horseback. They wanted to know if he had seen or heard anyone passing along the road early the evening before or during the night. He told them that he had neither heard nor seen anyone, and he asked them for whom they were hunting. The leader told him that eight negroes, five men and three women had crossed the Ohio river near Owensboro, Ky., two nights before. Two miles back they had heard a noise in a thicket; had fired several shots and thought they heard someone scream. My father told them that if the negroes crossed at Owensboro that the most likely route for them to take was by Winslow. The men held a short consultation, when one of them blew a loud blast on a horn, and shortly three more men rode up. They were quite a while in consultation, and then one of the men, apparently the leader, came into the yard and wanted to know if father had any one that he could let them have for a guide. We had three young men working for us. Father consulted with them, and one who was acquainted with the route agreed to go as far as the old McPaul place where the Princeton and Winslow road runs into the Petersburg and Boon-

## WORKINGS OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY

ville road, two or three miles south of Winslow. Soon after the men had gone Geo. Hill of near Lynnville came up to the house. He said that the negroes were secreted in the corn field that came up to our barn; that there were five negro men and three women and that one of the women had been wounded in the arm, while she was in hiding in the thicket where the slave hunters had heard the noise and did some shooting. That there were four white men and himself; two of them were Hansen's guards. Ira Caswell, who was one of the party, said that all were well armed and did not fear the slave hunters if the worst should come.

We had a barn built out of peeled hickory logs 40 feet square and was floored with thick planks so we could use horses in tramping wheat out on it. Under the floor we had a cellar that we used for storing potatoes, turnips and apples. This building stood on the ground where Dr. George C. Mason now has his office and garage in Oakland City. The negroes were put into this cellar. The wounded woman was not badly hurt. It was only a flesh wound between the wrist and elbow. The negroes were in the cellar all the next day. I went to see Basil Simpson who lived near Dongola bridge to have him watch and see if any negro hunters came to watch the bridge that night. I

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

also went to see Thomas Hart to have him bring his flat bottomed boat up to the upper end of the big bend about three-fourths of a mile below the bridge, so if the bridge was watched we could cross the negroes on the boat. W. B. Dill was working for us at the time. He was sent to Petersburg with a letter for Dr. Posey, telling him that we would be there about 12 o'clock that night. After sending two men each way on the roads from our house for quite a distance to see that no one was on the watch, two wagons were brought out and the negroes got into them. Old wagon sheets were put in so if we met anyone they could cover themselves and hide under them. I drove one of the wagons and one of Hansen's guards drove the other. We had two men on horseback to accompany us, one in front and one behind, so that they could give us warning if there was any danger. We were well armed, the two Hansen guards had Sharp rifles, I had a squirrel rifle and the two outriders had good guns and there was one extra rifle in each wagon. Before we got to Dongola, the front out-rider came back to the wagons and said that he had heard someone talking a little ways ahead. He went back up the road and found some boys coon hunting had crossed the highway. When we got to the bridge we met Mr. Simpson who told us that no one was

## WORKINGS OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY

watching the bridge, but that there was a party a little way up the river who had a trot line out and that they were watching it. We had an agreed signal with Mr. Hart that if we could cross the bridge that we would fire two shots in quick succession and he could leave the boat and come around the bend and meet us at the north edge of the bottom. We had gone but a little ways after leaving the bottom until we were overtaken by Thomas Hurt and Andy Atkins, both of them were firm friends (we were traveling on the Evansville and Petersburg road). They said that they would go with us until we crossed the Winslow and Kirk's mill road. It was thought that the slave hunters who had gone to Winslow the night before might have a patrol on that road. Everything went well until we came in sight of Hawthorn's sawmill. It was lighted up and some machinists were working on the machinery. We tried to find a way around but could not so we agreed the best way to do was to go boldly past. They were making so much noise about the machinery that they did not even hear us. When we were within two miles of Petersburg we met John Stuckey. He told us that three negro hunting Kentuckians were at Jack Kinman's hotel asleep and that the other three had gone with a guide to Kinderhook to watch the aqueduct and that Dr.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Posey would meet us north of Thomas Davidson's residence. We met Dr. Posey and delivered the negroes to him. I well remember what the Doctor said to us when he had seen what a likely bunch we had brought. He said: "Boys, you have made a good haul, Kentucky will the \$8,000 poorer, but humanity will be three times \$8,000 richer." We drove back home, tired and sleepy, too.

Some may think it strange that we would go to so much trouble and risk for the poor negro. This was our reason and I feel glad that we did it: They are human beings, very much like you and I perhaps, with a little bit more of childish simplicity. They are possessed of fidelity, gratitude, good humor and kindness, and have souls the same as you and I, and deserve to enjoy the great freedom of this country the same as you and I.

## CHAPTER IX

---

### CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

On a large farm in the big leaf tobacco region of Northwestern Kentucky, there was a large number of slaves and among that number was one that was a trusty helper named Jeff Lewis. He frequently acted as manager or overseer for his master. Late in the summer of 1853, they were storing tobacco in a large barn where it was to be cured by fire. Jeff was in the top with other help hanging the tobacco in the top tiers. Missing his foothold he fell to the ground floor fully 35 feet, and was thought to be killed since he fell on his head. He was very badly hurt and it was several weeks before he showed any signs of coming to his right mind. Some time before Jeff got hurt, one of the underground railroad employes, who was peddling all through western Kentucky, had been on intimate terms with Jeff, and when he was so badly off and out of his mind he often called for this man, known as Job Turner. Finally Turner on his regular route come to Jeff's home which was a small log shanty on the big tobacco farm. Jeff knew his friend and was very glad to see him. Before this there had been some understanding

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

between the two men. It was suggested by Jeff that in order to be useful to the cause, that it would be best for him when he was well, to appear to be weak in his mind. After a few weeks Jeff was as well as ever, but was flighty in his mind. He went back to work on the farm but every three or four days he would be off in his head; and at such times he would ride a pony that he had cared for and claimed, all over the neighborhood. He was harmless, but was known far and near as Crazy Jeff. Turner saw that there was a great opportunity through this shrewd negro to do good work for the Anti-Slavery League. In his crazy spells Jeff would call for Turner many times. His master asked him to see Jeff and talk with him all that he could, so as to cheer him up, saying that he was much the best hand on the farm. This was the opportunity that they wanted to form their plans. It was agreed between the two that Jeff should see some negro that he knew some five miles away and that he should work on and try to influence them to gain their freedom. To do this and meet Turner's helpers at an agreed place, he had to have several crazy spells during the next 20 days, so many that his master consulted with him about going to the insane asylum to be cured. To this Jeff was opposed. He told his master that the doctors would let him die just to

## CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

get to cut him up. He begged his master to let him stay on the farm and he would work all the time that he was not in the dark with his mind. His master knew that he would do more work than any two of his common helpers and be crazy two days in the week. He told his master that when he felt the spells coming on that he had to get away. He would ride his horse to the woods and hitch him to a sapling and lying down in the leaves or the grass would roll and tumble while the eclipse was coming on. After some hours he would feel the eclipse going off, then he would sleep for several hours and wake up all right. At the time agreed on Jeff was at the place with five likely negro men and one negro woman, the mother of three of the fugitives. Turner's two guards were there and took charge of the negroes and piloted them to the Ohio river west of Owensboro where they found another guard waiting for them. The party landed on the north bank of the Ohio river some time after midnight and got about ten miles north of the river a while before day when they came to a large farm where they had threshed wheat the day before, and had scattered the straw over several acres of ground besides stacking several large stacks. This was an excellent place to hide. They did not have much provision during the day, but all got a good supper at

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Ira Caswell's that night where one of the guards went during the day to notify him. Mr. Caswell, the three guards, and the six negroes got to Geo. Hill's in the early part of the night and made a forced march from there to my father's barn cellar where they rested all the next day until dark. Then they were loaded into two wagons and taken to Dr. Posey's coal bank, near Petersburg, Indiana. The night that Jeff was guiding the negroes to the agreed place of meeting, Job Turner was staying all night at his master's home. The next morning Jeff was on hands to work.

The six negroes that ran away lived five or six miles from Jeff's home. It was several days before there was much said about the fugitives getting away, since this was a long time before telephones. I was told by Jeff long afterward that the masters never got the least clue which way or where they went, or how they got away.

Turner and Jeff laid plans for Jeff to do his next work in a neighborhood some miles away in another direction. Jeff had from one to two crazy spells every week and took this opportunity to see the men he wanted to help gain their freedom. By the time that Turner got into that neighborhood again, Jeff had seven or eight that wanted to make the attempt to gain their liberties, but they were afraid that they would be run down and

### CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

captured by blood hounds, as a man living in that neighborhood owned six very vicious hounds and had captured with them several negroes that tried to run away. The owner kept the dogs for the money he made from capturing runaway negroes and criminals. They were valued at \$50.00 each.

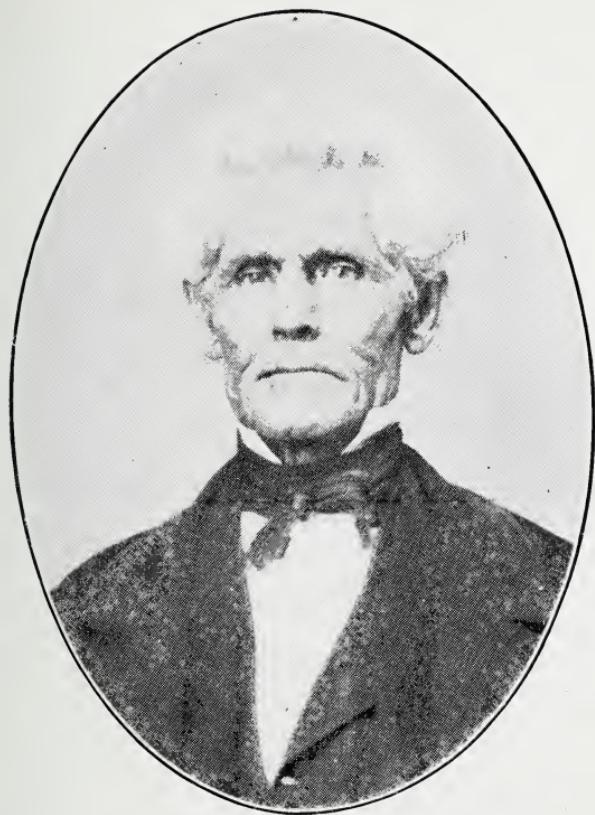
The next thing to do was to get the dogs out of the way. Jeff, in the company of one of the negroes that were going to attempt to get away, went to the kennel one night and found the dogs were locked in a building twelve feet high and about thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide, with a roof over about one-half of it. The balance had no roof and was a playground for the dogs. The men aiming to run away held a meeting. It was decided to wait until Jeff could see Turner, which would be during the next two weeks, and plan with him the best way to get rid of the dogs. When Turner learned the situation, he at once saw that the thing to do was to poison the dogs the night that the runaways left for the north; but how to get the poison was the question. Turner said that he would see the superintendent of the anti-slavery league, Mr. Hansen, and have him get it for him, but it would be nearly two weeks before he could have it. The time soon came around and Turner was on hands with an ounce of strychnine. It was agreed that the night before they were to

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

start two of the men would go possum hunting and secure a fine fat one, dress it nicely, cut it up and put strychnine on each piece. Early in the evening the wives of two of the men going north could throw it over the uncovered part of the kennel. There was a very old man that was the father of one of the women that was to feed the dogs who was to remain near the kennel and after waiting two hours, if there was any show of life, he was to give another dose.

Jeff with seven negroes got to the meeting place about ten o'clock at night and found three guards waiting for them. In a short time they were on the march for the Ohio river which they crossed only a short time before daylight.

The guards were aiming to get to a large thicket about 10 miles from the river, but they found that it would be broad day light before they could get that far. They came to a large corn-field and decided to risk that for a hiding place. It was a long day and they had at least ten miles to go before they came to Ira Caswell's which was the first station where they could get anything to eat. It was near nine o'clock at night when they met Mr. Caswell near his barn. He told them that they must be careful as there were two men from Boonville who had been seen twice that day just north of his farm. They were enquiring for



DR. JOHN W. POSEY.

A Member of the Executive Committee of the Anti-Slavery League, whose coal-bank at Petersburg was a resting place for hundreds of run-away negroes.



## CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

stray horses. These men were notorious for their escapade in trying to capture run away negroes for the reward offered, and it was said that those same two fellows had kidnapped a young free negro and was trying to get him over the Ohio river to take him south. Fortunately they were defeated by two Kentucky women who had owned the mother of the boy and had freed her and the boy when he was two years old. The woman made the thieves give the boy into their keeping and took him to Evansville. About eleven o'clock that night the seven negroes, Mr. Caswell, and the three guards, got into Mr. Hill's corn-field that went up to his barn. Mr. Caswell went to the house and notified Mr. Hill the condition of things, Mr. Hill said that there were three men hunting runaway negroes in Lynnville nearly all that afternoon and they left town late in the evening. After a hurried consultation it was agreed to make a forced march to my father's barn cellar. Mr. Hill had a two-horse wagon and team for it, and there were two other horses that could be ridden; this made transportation for all but a little heavy in the wagon, but at the hills it could be lightened by the occupants walking up hill. It was just beginning to show signs of day coming when George Hill came to my father's door and told him that seven negroes and two guards were

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

in the barn cellar and that one guard was in the upper barn loft on guard watching what went on in and around there. Mr. Hill went to bed and everything went on as it usually did and after breakfast we went on with our farm work. We still had the three colored boys that were waiting to get a chance to go to Liberia and that I have described in a former chapter. Everybody was on the lookout. The guards took regular turns in the top loft of the barn on guard duty where they could have a good view all over our big farm (on which now stands Oakland City, Ind.) Nothing unusual was seen or heard. When night came on we got out our teams and as a precaution put an old fishing boat on the front wagon with nets and fishing tackle of all kinds. We sent one of the guards to Dr. Posey during the day to notify him of our coming; also sent word to Mr. Basal Simpson to look out for bridge watchers at the Dongola bridge. Just as we got started we met a young man that Mr. Simpson had sent to notify us that three men were at the Dongola bridge. One of the guards acted as front out-rider and one watched after the rear of our company. We had but little fear of any force that might attempt to interfere with us as we were all well armed, but we did not want to have any trouble as it would cause us trouble in our future operations. All

### CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

went well until we got near the bridge when our front guard came back and said that there were three men in the road near the bridge. Mr. Hill went forward and we drove up. Mr. Hill asked them what they wanted. They answered that they were hunting their negroes that had run away from them in Kentucky. They wanted to know who we were and where we were going. Mr. Hill told them that we were going on a fishing and hunting trip. Hill asked them how many negroes they had lost and they told him seven. Hill called to one of the guards and said: "Jim, was that the number seen in the woods by Joe Hensley near Winslow bridge about three o'clock this afternoon?" The guard said it was. Hill told the slave hunters that if they were expecting to catch the negroes they should get to Winslow as soon as possible and if the negroes had crossed the bridge they could catch them before they crossed White river. If he was not with this hunting party he would be glad to go with them to see the fun. He told them further that there was a direct road to Winslow that we crossed about two miles farther on and if they wanted to go that way he would ride with them to the cross roads. They said they would go and soon had their horses. When we got to the cross roads we found Mr. Hill. He said that as soon as he put them on the right road they

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

went at a good speed to the east. We found John Stuckey about two miles south of Petersburg; he told us that fugitives would have to cross White river about one mile east of Wright's ferry; that he had three skiffs put in the water there since dark and that there would be two wagons on the north bank to convey the negroes farther on. He further told us that several negro hunters were at Jack Kinman's hotel and that they had a guard at the aqueduct at Kinderhook. He also said that it was but a little way to the river and a bad road for wagons so that it would be best for the negroes to walk that distance. Hill said for fear of a slip in our calculation he would take two of the guards with him and go to the river and see them across and that if we could turn our teams and go back that he would overtake us before we were half way home. When we got home we found that Mr. John Hansen had come to my father's soon after we got started with the fugitives. Mr. Hansen had come from Evansville that day; he said that parties from Kentucky were there trying to get some clue of the missing negroes. They were telling a fearful tale. They said that some one had poisoned six blood hounds. The next morning Hansen had the three guards, Mr. Hill and myself met him in my father's library. He cautioned us all under no circumstances to talk with any one,

## CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

not even if we knew he was in sympathy with our work. Our liberties and fortunes were at stake, and we could do better work to keep our own counsel. Mr. Hansen that morning gave me a bran new Sharp's breech-loading rifle. I have the gun yet.

Jeff Lewis was a very bright colored mulatto and he had a wife that was as white as he was. She was owned by a man living near Uniontown, Kentucky, and was a house servant. Jeff had planned to get his wife away to Canada, but it was found to be a difficult proposition as she roomed in her master's home. She told Jeff that some time not long off her master and mistress were going to the neighborhood of Lexington, Ky., to attend the wedding of her mistress' sister and she would know the date in a short time. The house and farm would be left in the charge of an old trusted servant and it would then be easy to get her away. Jeffs wife was well treated and she liked her master and mistress. Her master was a drinking man and often came home under the influence of liquor and it was reported that he was in failing circumstances. She was all the time in dread of his having to give up his property which might result in her being sold further south, into a life of drudgery. The excitement caused by the seven negroes running away and the killing of the six blood hounds was intense. The patrol

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

force was tripled and every man that was not known was stopped and made to give an account of himself. Men were riding all over that section of Kentucky hunting for a clue. Men were sent in bunches of three to many places in southern Indiana, but the only word they had that the negroes were ever seen after leaving home was what George Hill made up when he found three men guarding the Dongola bridge by telling them that seven negroes were seen near the Winslow bridge that day. These men when they got home told of this circumstance and said that when they went to Winslow they could not find anything about the truth of the statement. They said that they tried to find the man that told them about the negroes being there, but could not find him. Mr. Hansen got word to Turner to go slow, that his work was well done, but he was in a dangerous situation. If the Kentucians got the least clue that implicated him they would hang him as high as Haman. Turner was good grit as well as a very intelligent man. When he met any of the men who had lost their negroes, he would sympathize with them when they would abuse the abolitionists of the north for their misfortune. Jeff still had crazy spells. He and Turner had many talks laying plans but both of them felt that it was best to be very careful until the time came for Jeff to

## CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

get his wife. There were three slaves that lived about three miles from Jeff's home that he wanted to liberate. Their owner had the patrol arrest him one time and had him whipped for talking back to him. For this Jeff wanted to even up. He met one of the slaves in a short time and made a date to meet him and the other two at an old church the next Sunday night where the negroes were to have a meeting. Jeff knew that Turner would be back on his return trip on Wednesday of the next week, after he was to meet the three negroes at the church. He intended to go and see his wife on Sunday before noon as he was allowed to see her twice a month. He found that his wife's mistress and master had been gone on their Lexington trip for five days and they intended to stay fifteen or twenty days. Jeff made an arrangement with his wife that she on the next Sunday afternoon was to visit a woman friend of hers not more than two miles from Walnut Branch Deek Lick, that she was to stay late and when she started home to go the main road until she came to a small cross road running to the east. This would take her in the right direction and Jeff would meet her before she got far and take her to the meeting place. Jeff had cut out a pretty big task for himself, but he was determined to carry it out if he had to pilot them to the Ohio river. He

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

saw the three negroes Sunday night and they all agreed to meet him the next Sunday night at the Walnut Branch Deer Lick, a place only two miles away and well known to them. Jeff was off in his head Wednesday in the afternoon of that day. Turner came to his shanty to see him, when Jeff informed him of the big job that he had laid out to put through the coming Sunday night. Turner promised to have the three guards at the Deer Lick, Sunday night. Jeff had his Master to write his name on one of the saddle skirts, so if he was to die in some of his crazy spells his Master would get his horse. Jeff told the people on the plantation that he was going to church that night. He got his horse and saddled him, took an extra hat with him, and set out to meet his wife whom he soon found. He took her up behind him and rode to the Deer Lick where he found the three negroes and three guards. Shortly after they left the Deer Lick for the Ohio river. The byroad they were on went near the bank of Green river. Jeff took his horse and with a strong halter tied him securely to a sapling and threw his best hat on the ground near the river bank. He aimed to make his master believe that he had drowned himself. Jeff thought this might delay pursuit for a while. It was near midnight when they got to the north bank of the Ohio river. Two of the guards were

## CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

well acquainted with the country to the north along the route they intended going. They aimed to reach a very large thicket about 10 miles from the river that I have described in a former chapter. It was yet some time until daylight when they got to the dense thicket, which they went into a long way from the road where they found plenty of leaves and grass to make good beds. Soon all were asleep except one of the guards who kept a good lookout to see what went on around them. Soon after getting into camp another one of the guards went to Mr. Caswell's to notify him so that they would have food prepared when the fugitives got there that night as the aim was to push on to my father's barn cellar.

Nothing happened during the day worthy of note. When night came, everybody was rested and ready for the march. When they got to Mr. Caswell's they found Mr. George Hill there. He had been notified by Mr. Caswell. As soon as supper was eaten, they were on the go in charge of Mr. Hill, who took them a route more to the west than formerly coming through on a blind road that ran over the McGregor hills east of Somerville, Ind. They had no trouble and about 4 o'clock they arrived at our farm and all went into the barn cellar, except Mr. Hill and one of the guards. My father told Mr. Hill that several strange men

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

had been seen riding around the neighborhood the last two or three days pretending to be buying mules and horses. About noon the day that the negroes were placed in the cellar Mr. J. J. Kirkman then sheriff or deputy sheriff of Gibson county came to our house and stayed for dinner. Our three colored boys were still working on the farm. Mr. Kirkman saw one of the boys as he put his horse up and fed it. He asked my father about the boys and was told that they had been left in his charge until they could be sent to Liberia. At dinner Mr. Hill was introduced to Mr. Kirkman as a practical steam engineer. He asked Mr. Kirkman if there was any chance for an engineer to get work in Princeton. After dinner Mr. Kirkman and my father went to the library and were there for some time. He told my father that the reason he was here was to warn him (they were old friends and of the same political party). He said that an old Kentuckian living a few miles south of our home was in Princeton recently and was telling that he had three negro boys who were really slaves; that he would not let any one see them; that two men came after the boys and that my father had run them off with a gun, and had repeatedly threatened to shoot any one who dared to try to get the boys. (This was the same old fellow that I gave a description of in a former

## CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

chapter who was always very loud in prayer and never failed to put in "Oh Lord, incline the hearts of the servants to obey his master.") When Mr. Kirkman was ready to go my father had a horse saddled and rode with him for several miles to see if anything unusual was going on. It was quite dark before we commenced to get ready to go farther north. Mr. Hill and two of the guards had been all around our farm to see if the way was clear. The wagons were brought out of the barn and loaded. One of them had the old fish boat and fishing tackle on it, as it had the last time that we went, since we thought that we might have to claim again being on a fishing and hunting expedition. We had heard from Mr. Simpson during the afternoon that there was no one about the bridge and if they came later he would let us know. Jeff and his wife were surprising happy. She stood the march as well as any of them. The other three negroes were in good shape but they were awfully afraid their master would overtake them and they believed if he did he would kill them. Jeff told them that they had to swim a river three hundred yards wide. One of them could not swim and he felt sure he would be captured. The man we sent to see Dr. Posey could not find him, but he did find John Stuckey and he told him that we would have to do the same way

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

as we did with the last lot—cross the river east of Wright's ferry; that he would be at the point where we left the main road and pilot us to the river; that he had found a way that we could get to the river with wagons by going through the corner of a field that had not been cultivated that year. When we got to the river we found two lusty strong men in skiffs to take the fugitives over. Bidding us goodby, they went into the skiffs and were soon on the other bank. We waited until they were in the wagon and under way to the next station. Mr. Stucky told us that there were so many men in town every day hunting for runaway negroes that it was not safe at present to put them in Dr. Posey's coal bank. He also said that the Kinderhook aqueduct was guarded every night. When we got back home the chickens were crowing for day.

Eleven years had gone by and a great change had come over this country. Hot headed southerners had brought on a war hoping to dissolve the Union. Hundreds of battles had been fought and many thousands of good men had been killed and hospitals all over the country were full of wounded men. Mr. Lincoln had freed the negroes. Late in the fall of 1864 I was commanding the military prison at Nashville, Tenn. A guard brought a prisoner to the office and handed me the committ-

## CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

ment paper. I read a name, "Jeff Lewis, first Sergeant, Co., I, 17 U. S. Colored Troops," charged with shooting at an officer. I turned around and looked at the prisoner, and was sure it was the same Jeff Lewis that I knew. I receipted for him and told him to come inside the railing and take a seat. I turned to him and said: "Sergeant, I want you to tell me all that you know about this case." He said that he was walking along Union street with another member of his company, when he saw that there were many soldiers with their accoutrements on lying and sitting on the sidewalk. As he got opposite to them a Lieutenant stepped in front of him. He evidently was pretty drunk and said, "You are two pretty tony dressed damned negroes, and stepped in front of me and spit a mouthful of tobacco juice on the breast of my uniform (I looked and it was plain to be seen). He followed me up and kicked me twice. I pulled my revolver and shot him in the leg. I did not want to kill him, although he deserved it." I sent an orderly to the prison and had the prison sergeant come to me. He was one of my own soldiers and I knew would do just what I said for him to do. I told him that this prisoner and I were old friends and I wanted him to assign him the bed and the little room next to the one he had. I got the name of the soldier that was with him when

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

he shot the drunken Lieutenant. Lewis seemed surprised at what I had told the prison sergeant. He did not have the least idea who I was, but I knew him by his name. I told him to go and have a good night's sleep. I went to see Col. Hunter Brooks the Provost Marshal and got a copy of the charges preferred against Jeff Lewis. I then went to General John F. Miller's office, the post commander, I there found Captain Livingston Howland of Indianapolis, Adjutant General on General Miller's staff. I explained the situation to him, gave a history of Jeff's work, and got from him the name of the officer Jeff had shot and the command that he belonged to. I went to the hospital and saw the doctor in charge of the hospital and he said the lieutenant was crazy drunk when they brought him to the hospital, raving like a maniac, declaring that he would kill every negro soldier he could, after he got well. I wrote a note to the captain of the company that the lieutenant belonged to and asked him to call at my office. I then made out charges against the lieutenant charging him with conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman and had three specifications to the charge. First, that he was drunk in a public street in the city of Nashville, Tenn., and while he was on duty; second, that he abused Sergeant Jeff Lewis by using vulgar language

## CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

about him and spitting tobacco juice on him ; third, that he kicked the said Sergeant Lewis. During the day the captain of the company that Lieutenant Jones belonged to came to see me. I made many inquiries about the lieutenant and found that he got drunk as often as he could get the whiskey. I showed the captain the charges I had and he said it all could be proved. The captain suggested on account of his widowed mother that it would be best to let him resign, and he further said the sergeant did nothing but what he should have done. He was as much a soldier as the lieutenant was. The resignation (for the good of the service) was received and forwarded to department headquarters. The charge against Jeff Lewis was destroyed by the order of General John F. Miller and the sergeant ordered to return to duty with his company. I sent to the prison for Lewis and told him that he was free. I then told him about the day he with his wife and other fugitives spent in my father' barn cellar 11 years ago. Jeff told me that Canada was so cold, that as soon as Mr. Lincoln's proclamation was issued, he brought his wife and came to the city of Evansville, Ind., that his wife was staying with some colored people in that city (giving me the location) while he was to be in the army, but that she was not satisfied there. I told him that Judge

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

A. L. Robinson was always a friend to the colored people and if he wanted me to, I would have him look after her for him. He said he would be glad to have me do so. I wrote to Judge Robinson and he took her into his home as a maid to help his wife. I then asked Jeff if he would like to be in the Freedman's Bureau at Washington; that I felt sure through Mr. Hansen I could get him and his wife both permanent places at good wages. He said he would be glad to go. I wrote to Mr. Hansen who was acquainted with Jeff's history and found that he could give both of them a place at good wages as soon as they could come. I went to see General Miller, who sent for Jeff's captain and explained to him the nice position that Jeff could get in the Freedman's Bureau at Washington. Gen. Miller asked the captain to discharge him so he could receive promotion. Soon his discharge came and Jeff came to me and I secured transportation for him and his wife to Washington, D. C. where they arrived in due time and were put to work by Mr. Hansen. Jeff told me that the owners of the slaves that he helped free never had the least clue how they went or where they went; that his master was dead and the master of his wife was broken up and was in the Confederate army; that the man that owned

### CRAZY JEFF LEWIS

the three negroes that he helped escape to even up with him, was killed at Shiloh, on the Confederate side.

## CHAPTER X

---

### BEN SWAIN

There was a station a little east of Rockport, Ind., where many negroes were crossed over the Ohio river. The man having charge of this station was a book agent and a peddler of fine stationery and fine pen holders and pencils. He also took subscriptions for periodicals published both in the north and south. His name was Henry Johnson. He traveled over an extensive territory. He had been at that station for quite a while and was acquainted with many people of both colors on his route. Johnson had a helper in a middle aged negro named Ben Swain. The two men had sent quite a number of slaves on their northern march who got to Canada. Ben met Johnson one night and told him that he had quite a number who would be ready to go in the next ten days. They selected the old Hanels tobacco barn as the place to meet; it was situated near a small road that ran to the river and set the time for Thursday night a week. Johnson told Ben that he would have guides at the barn at that time. The next morning Ben hunted Johnson up and told him that after he saw him last night John

BEN SWAIN

Ray, a nearly white negro, came to see him and wanted him to make arrangements with him to help persuade a good number of slaves to meet at some place not too far away, to be sent to Canada and freedom. Ray told Ben that this arrangement was put on foot by quite a number of white men who owned slaves. The plan was that when the negroes started on their march they were to go by a place where the white men were in ambush, so that they could capture and hand-cuff the negroes and make them promise that they never would attempt to escape again. That if they did they would be sent to the Mississippi country and sold to men owning large cotton plantations. There was nothing that a Kentucky negro dreaded more than the thought that he might be sold to negro owners farther south. Ben and Johnson consulted together and it was arranged that Ben should agree to help on the condition that as Ray was very unpopular with the negroes that Ben should select those that were to go and that the meeting place was to be at the Gray Rock quarry at the same time agreed on between Johnson and Ben at a former meeting only at a time two hours later than the meeting at Hanel's tobacco barn. Ben went to see Ray and had him to go with him early as he wanted to have everything in good shape. He had arranged for several

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

negroes to meet him at Hannel's tobacco barn and they would go by there and take them over to Gray Rock quarry. When the two men got to the tobacco barn they found quite a lot of negroes and five white men who were guides. They were soon put in marching order and started. It had been expected that Ray, when he found that he had been tricked, would attempt to get away so there were two strong negro men selected to see that he went along. He called to Ben to know what this meant. He was told that they were going to take him to Canada and free him. Ray said that he did not want to be free, that his master was going to free him in two years and give him a horse and saddle and that several white men had agreed to make him up \$50.00 for getting up this gathering. They had gone but a little ways when Ray attempted to run away. The two men caught him and tied his hands behind him. He then commenced to make all the noise he could, when a gag was tied in his mouth. In this way they went until they got to where the skiffs were to cross the river. The two guards asked Ray if he would go along quietly if they would untie his hands. He nodded his willingness, but as soon as his hands were untied he drew a large knife and tried to kill one of the two men that had him in charge, when the other one hit him with a heavy club that ended

BEN SWAIN

his career. He was thrown into the river and the rest of the party went across the river and on to a large cornfield, some ten miles north where they went in to stay until night should come on. There were 12 negro men and five guards in the party. They were not disturbed and put in the day sleeping and resting. As soon as it was night they were on the march, aiming to cross the Patoka river before daylight between what is now Velpin and Winslow. When they got to the river they found that it was swollen by recent rains, and they could not find any place to cross, so they went into a thick brushy place as daylight was coming. The brush was very thick and made a good place to hide, but there was not more than two acres in it. The bottom on all sides except the side next to the river was very open. This was the only place that furnished a screen to hide in that they could find. After they got into camp they found that their supply of provisions was getting low and they had no certain assurance of getting any more before they got near the north side of Daviess County.

The guards remembered that they had passed a nice looking farm house only a little way from the edge of the river bottoms, so it was decided to send two of the guards there to see if they could purchase some provisions. They found

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

the farmer and his family (who was one of the numerous families of Corns living in that part of Pike County, Indiana,) and had no trouble in purchasing all the bacon that they needed. The bread question was the thing that they did not know how to solve. They finally made a bargain with the farmer's wife to bake them a good supply of corn and flour bread. Mr. Corn inquired who they were and what they were doing. They told him that they were mineralogists looking over this country to find how much mineral wealth there was in it, in the way of coal and building stone. They went back to their hiding place with the provisions, all had a good dinner and soon all were asleep, except one guard left on duty to watch over the camp.

Everything was very quiet until about one hour before sundown, when the guard on duty awakened the other guards and told them that several men on horseback were approaching the camp, coming along a bypath that run along the river bank. When they got within about seventy-five yards the guard stepped out of the thicket and ordered them to halt. They all stopped and asked the guard what he was doing there. He told them he was a mineralogist working over the country and this was their camp. One of the horsemen dismounted and said that he wanted to see what

BEN SWAIN

this fellow was up to. He came up within about twenty feet of the guard who ordered him to halt. The advancing fellow said, "do you know who I am? I am the deputy sheriff and I have authority to arrest all suspicious characters that I meet and I am going to arrest you!" Jerking out an old pepper box revolver that was used at that time he started toward the guard, who unslung a Sharp's rifle and pointed it at the deputy's head. This stopped him. By this time the other four guards were on hands with their guns; one of them took the pistol away from the threatening fellow and threw it into the river; also took an old-fashioned dirk knife from him and threw it into the river. They then about faced the raving fellow and told him to go back to his horse. They soon were all gone back the way they had come. A drift was found a little way up the river that lacked but a few feet of crossing. Soon some old stakes were gotten and pieced out the space so that it made a good footbridge. As soon as it was twilight they went over the river on the drift and were marching away for White river, that they aimed to reach before midnight. There was nothing important happened until they got near where the town of Algiers now stands. They ran up against a regular spelling bee; horses and wagons were hitched on all sides of the school house. The

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

guides and fugitives had to go quite a way around the school house before they would venture to go in the road again. Before midnight they got to the river a little west of north from where Otwell, Pike County, stands. They went along a river road to the east for quite a distance when they came to a regular logging camp where men had been putting logs into rafts. The guards selected out four large dead poplar logs and rolled them into the river; some grape vines were secured and the logs tied together. They had a raft that with the aid of a setting pole and two or three four-foot clapboards, held up the seventeen men and landed them on the north bank of the river. They were soon on their way to the next station which was near the north line of Daviess county. When the guards got to that station, four of them returned to their stations on the Ohio river. One guide who had been several times over the route with fugitives remained to pilot them to a point near Lake Michigan where they were taken in charge by the men that were to land them into Canada. The deputy sheriff and party were hunting for three runaway negroes for which there was a large reward offered. When they got back to Petersburg and told of the adventure they had had with the five men who had such fine guns, they were told of an old tradition that the first

BEN SWAIN

settlers had gotten from the Indians; that some place up on the Patoka river there was a rich silver mine, that the white people had hunted for many times without success. It was generally believed that the guards were there hunting for the mine and did not intend that any one should know what they were up too.

Ben Swain who lost his life trying to aid his race was a man more than 50 years old. He was intellegent and trustworthy. The night that the two negroes had to kill John Ray on the bank of the Ohio river in self defense the guard that had charge of the men, tried to persuade Ben to go on with them and gain his freedom. Swain said no, that he had some friends that he wanted to aid before he went and if he did not get away it would not matter much as he was getting old, and he wanted to work as long as he could help his race.

## CHAPTER XI

---

### SAM LYNN

Sam Lynn was a very strong resolute man. His father had been smuggled into Cuba with many others by men engaged in the African slave trade. They kidnapped their victims in the wilds of Africa, and sold them to the Spanish planters in Cuba and planters on other West India Islands, and many times on the southern coast of the United States.

His mother was a full blooded Choctaw Indian woman. These Indians before they were colonized in the Indian territory, lived on the southern borders of the state of Mississippi. Sam was owned and lived with John Lynn, and took his name from his master. They lived near the Louisiana line. Sam's mother and father were dead and left four children, three boys and one girl. Sam and his sister belonged to Mr. Lynn; the other two brothers were owned by a Mr. Johnson and they all lived near each other. They were strong healthy negroes, and worked every day on the plantations. Sam's master hired him to a sugar planter for three or four months work on a sugar plantation in Louisiana. One day in load-

SAM LYNN

ing a heavy hogshead on a wagon, Sam stepped on the overseer's foot; this enraged him and he kicked Sam who kicked him in return. They kept up a running fight for some minutes around the sugar house. Finally the overseer drew a large knife and said, no "nigger" could hit him and live, and made a lunge at Sam who hit him over the head with a stick of wood and killed him. Sam knew that they would have him hung if they got him. The overseer's horse was hitched to a fence near the sugar house and it only took Sam a minute until he had the horse loose and was on his back and away toward home which was thirty miles away. It was late in the evening when this happened. Sam got to his master's home before midnight and told his master what he had done. His master knew that the authorities would be after him as soon as possible. Sam was a valuable negro, worth at least fifteen hundred dollars. Mr. Lynn was at a loss to know what was best to do. He believed by Sam's statement that the overseer brought the trouble on himself and Sam was not to blame. He felt that he was doing the right thing to try to save Sam. Mr. Lynn had a cousin living in Ohio County, Kentucky that owned slaves. It was a long ways to travel, but he resolved to try it. He told Sam to feed the tired horse and get out his best horse and be ready to

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

travel in thirty minutes. Sam was to ride the overseer's horse some fifty miles and then turn him loose and he would go home to the sugar mill, then Sam would have to walk. Word was left by Mr. Lynn that he had gone to New Orleans. As no one had seen Sam, they would know nothing about his being home; this would make them hunt for him in the country surrounding the sugar mill. It was a long and tiresome trip but they finally got to the neighborhood where his cousin lived. They told Mr. Lynn that the man that he was inquiring about owned a very large tobacco farm and twenty-five negroes and that he was a drinking man and very quarrelsome when under the influence of whiskey. Mr. Lynn did not let any one know that he was related in any way to him. His intention had been to hire Sam to him and leave for home, but what he had heard was so unfavorable he did not know what was best to do. He concluded to go and see him. He found a man showing evidence of being a hard drinker and very brutal in his looks. Sam was with his master. He went up to Sam and examined his arms and said to Mr. Lynn, "This boy would make a good field hand why do you have him for a body servant." Mr. Lynn said that he had not thought of selling him. Sam got a chance (while the tobacco farmer was talking with some men who

### SAM LYNN

called to see him) to say to his master to sell him and get all that he could for him and leave the rest to him. When the cousin came back to Mr. Lynn he said that he was in great need of a good strong young man and he would give the full value for Sam. Mr. Lynn asked him what he thought would be a fair price for such a slave. His cousin said that from twelve to fifteen hundred dollars. Mr. Lynn told him that he could have him for fifteen hundred dollars. This was agreed to and Sam changed masters. Mr. Lynn had a talk with Sam before he was sent to the negro quarters. Sam said to his master to have no fears of his being badly used, as he would take care of himself. Mr. Lynn returned to his Mississippi home and Sam went to work in the great tobacco barn. Mr. Lynn's cousin, Marshal Ford, had a very fine family of educated people. Ford's drinking spells were carried on when he was away from home. Henry Johnson was always a welcome guest. He was an accomplished musician and the two daughters of the family were well educated in music. They had many pleasant evenings together. The musical instrument that they owned was getting old so the girls persuaded their father to get them a new one. Mr. Johnson was commissioned by the father to select a good piano and have it sent to the nearest landing on the river

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

to their home; from there it had to be hauled in a wagon. Mr. Johnson was there when the piano arrived and helped to set it up. It was very heavy and required the help of several men to put it in. Among the help was Sam Lynn. He was so tremendously strong that he attracted the attention of Johnson who later talked with Ben Swain about him. Ben was acquainted with him and said that Sam had talked to him about wanting to gain his freedom. Swain said that Sam was so recently from the far south that he did not know much about the country he now lived in but he was ready to do anything to gain his freedom. Ben told Johnson if he wanted to talk with Sam to make a date and place and he would have him there. Johnson would not be back in that section for ten days so he made a date to correspond with the time of his return at the old vacant tobacco barn near Mr. Ford's farm. The time soon came around, Johnson found the two negroes there and they talked a long time about runaway negroes and the danger that they were all in who in any way aided them. Johnson asked Sam about Mr. Ford's negroes. Sam said that they were the most ignorant lot that he had ever seen. That they actually did not have the least idea where Canada was, nor whether it was a country or a town. They had been so completely kept in dark-

SAM LYNN

ness that he had to pretend that he too was as ignorant as the rest of them in order to get along with the overseer. It was understood between the three that Swain would see Sam when he could be of any service that he would have Sam help him; and when all the work that they dared to do in that section was done they would help Sam to gain his freedom. It was getting late and they separated. Ben and Sam went away together and Johnson slipped away back to a little room that he had rented from a poor widow woman. Sam and Ben were walking along the main road, when three men who were patrols stepped into the road from a bunch of bushes and confronted them. Ben started to run when one of the patrols shot him in the back of his head with a heavy charge of buck shot. Sam wrenched the gun from the patrol's hand and knocked him down with it; one of the other two were trying to stop him when he, with the gun barrel, laid him in the road. The other man was trying to shoot him with an old pepper-box revolver that would not go off. Sam took it from him and knocked him down with it and kicked him until he thought he was dead. There were four men within a space of ten steps laying in the road apparently all dead. Sam went to Ben and was certain that he was dead. He hurriedly left the place and went directly to his lit-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

tle room, examined his clothes to see that there was no blood on them. The men lay in the road the rest of the night and until a negro who was hunting his mules that had got out found the men and gave the alarm. Squire Bodin who lived near the scene of this fearful tragedy was notified and he had his warrant officer or constable summon a jury to assemble at the point where the four bodies lay. They found two men dead, Ben Swain and the first man hit with the gun by Sam. The other two were so badly off that they did not know anything. This raised great excitement in all that section. There was not the least evidence to be had except the ghastly sight that was before them. The two badly wounded men were some three or four days before they could give an intelligent account of the dreadful encounter that they had. One said: "There were two negroes, one of them a medium sized man the other an awful big man full seven feet high. The little man as soon as they stepped into the road started to run and was shot by their leader, when the great giant wrested the gun from him and knocked him dead with it. Then he turned on me and hit me a terrible blow that laid me out. The other patrol was trying to help me when the giant knocked him down and beat him into jelly." They stuck to their statement and it was believed

SAM LYNN

that a tame gorilla was with Ben that night and had done all that terrible work

Sam was working in the tobacco barn and saw no one except the hands working with him. Things went on this way for two weeks when one of the hands told Sam that one of the patrols said that the one that hurt him was a very broad shouldered thick necked negro and was as strong as a horse. This alarmed Sam for the description tallied with his makeup and he was afraid that when the patrolmen got so they could get about, they might conclude that the negro that done them up was not seven feet high, and in some way work him into it. One evening just after dark he met Mr. Johnson going up to the big house and told him his fears and asked him if he could have a guide meet him some place and take him over the Ohio river. Johnson said that the next night he would "have two guides at the big tobacco barn, with half the roof blown off three miles from here, you and Ben visited there one Sunday not long ago. Be sure and be there by 8 o'clock at night; there will be two other men and their wives and three children from 10 to 14 years old to go at the same time." The morning before he was to start to run away, the two patrols come to his master's house and had Sam sent for. They both took a good look at him. One of

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

them said he believed it was the man the other said that he did not think so. Mr. Ford, Sam's master, was away from home and had been for several days. The overseer was the one that was consulted who said it would do no harm to have Squire Bodin have his warrant man arrest Sam and they would go over the case and it might bring out some clue that would put them on the track of getting the right man. Mrs. Ford had learned from the overseer that Sam was likely to be arrested and she told the overseer that he had best have nothing to do with it, if he did he would have trouble with Mr. Ford when he got home. It had gone too far to be recalled by this time. It was about four o'clock in the evening when one of Sam's workmates in the barn learned that they were aiming to arrest Sam after supper and have a night trial in a little office of Squire Bodin. Sam took a heavy tobacco screw pin made of hickory and dodged around the building until he got to a thick wood-lot when he made the best time that he could for some distance. In crossing the main road at the end of the wood-lot he was within fifteen feet of a man that owned two blood hounds. The man was returning home which was just across the lane from Squire Bodin's house. Sam knew that it would not be half an hour before the dogs would be after him and he wanted to lead

SAM LYNN

the men away from the old tobacco barn where he was to be at 8 o'clock; it was now after five. As the dog man rode up to his house he met the constable who told him that he was then going to arrest one of Mr. Ford's negroes. The dog man told him what he had seen. Squire Bodin was called and the same was told him when he ordered the constable to deputize the man and his dogs and try to capture the culprit. In a little while the loud bay of the dogs as they run very fast on the trail of Sam, was heard. He led them away from the meeting place and into a thick country that horsemen would have to go slow over. The dogs were soon close to Sam and baying very loud. One was several rods ahead. Sam got in a good place where he had plenty of room and where there was no brush. As the dog came within reach he hit him with the deadly bludgeon that he carried and as the second came up killed him. Then he turned his course and went to the tobacco barn with half the roof blown away, where he found seven negroes and two guides. They were soon on the go for the river. It was after one o'clock when they were landed on the northern shore. At the river they received another guide, or guard, that had several times been over the route that they were to go. They started on the main road that led north, aiming to get to a large corn field about

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

ten or twelve miles away; this would take them southwest of Taylorsville, now Selvin. This large cornfield had in one corner about two acres of Spanish needles that was more than four feet high and as thick as they could grow. It was near daylight when they got there. They found it a good place to rest and sleep which they needed. They were not disturbed until about four o'clock in the evening when one of the guards awakened the other guards and told them that he saw three men that seemed to be tracking them. They got over the fence where the fugitives did and were tracking them up toward the weed patch. The three guards blackened their faces as that was a standing order for them to do when they were likely to come in contact with white men, as it was aimed to make them believe that it was the negroes doing the work. When they got up within about 50 yards they were halted by the guards and asked what they wanted. They said that they were looking for runaway negroes and thought that they had found them. The guard ordered them to come no further. They said, "what do you, a black negro, have to do with where we want to go. We are prepared to defend ourselves." "So are we," the guard replied, "and if you some any nearer you will be hurt." Sam asked the guards to let him go out to them and pretend to hold a parley with

SAM LYNN

them, that he was satisfied he could clean out the whole bunch. The guard told them that if they wanted them to, they would send out one of their men to talk to them. They said to send him along. Sam got up and with his club for a walking stick hobbled out toward where the three men were standing. He appeared to be so lame that he could hardly walk and seemed to lean on the walking stick. When he got up to the men he asked what they wanted. They told him that they had authority to arrest and return fugitive slaves to their masters, and that they were satisfied that they were run-away slaves as they found their tracks five miles back and had followed them to this field. Sam had been looking them over, while the foreman was talking, and saw that they had no arms, unless it was revolvers in their pockets. Sam said to him, "what will you do if we don't surrender to you?" "Then we will capture you." "You will find that you will have a big job on your hands," said Sam. The leader replied: "We will show you by taking you now," and started for Sam, who was over his lameness in a moment and hit the advancing slave-hunter on the side of his head and downed him; the next was knocked down before he could move from his place; the third one tried to draw a revolver, but had his arm broken and the revolver knocked ten

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

feet away; the broken armed man commenced to yell "murder," as loud as he could, when he was knocked down and silenced. Sam had hit the men terribly hard licks and they were apparently dead. It was getting late and in an hour more they would be on the march, but what would they do with the wounded men? They would come to during the night and alarm the country and have pursuers after them. They found some strong cords that the slave hunters carried to tie the fugitives when captured. It was decided to tie their hands behind them and tie their legs together and tie wooden gags in their mouths. This would prevent them from getting up and making any noise. They would have to stay there until some one found them. Early that morning one of the guards that was well acquainted with the roads in the country went to see George Hill and try to get him to furnish them two wagons so that they could get over White river as soon as possible. He found Mr. Hill and it was understood that two wagons would be at the crossing of the road they were on with the Fredonia road at 7 o'clock that evening. The two guides were on the march with the eight negroes and about seven o'clock found Mr. Hill's two wagons; all were loaded in and made a rapid march to the north. Mr. Hill was a little alarmed when he

SAM LYNN

found what a battle they had with the slave hunters and decided that he would trust his teams to the guards with the understanding that they were to be returned as soon as the fugitives crossed White river, which they aimed to do at the Harriman ferry a little northwest of Otwell, Ind. The man who had charge of the ferry at night was a friend. The fugitives and three guards got over White river in good shape without any further incident worthy of mention. Mr. Hill the next day after he sent his team went up in the neighborhood of where the battle was fought. It was the middle of the afternoon before the tied men were found; they had hitched their horses in a grove two miles south of the battle field. The finding of these men in the condition they were in raised a great commotion in the Spradly neighborhood. There were a number of people from that section that put in the most of their time scouting over the country hunting for runaway negroes and were very domineering over people who did not believe as they did. Gilp Allen was always with people from that neighborhood. It was found that none of the men were dead but the fellow that tried to shoot Sam had his skull cracked and was still unconscious. They said that they did not see but two of the negroes, the one that challenged them and the

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

limping one that beat them up so. No one wanted to see those men killed but there was many a one that was glad of the defeat they met with. I met Henry Johnson some time after this at Evansville and was introduced to him by Mr. Hanson. In talking about Sam Lynn and his exploits Johnson said that in a free for all fight that Sam was worth his weight in wild cats. Johnson said that the men that owned the bloodhounds found them the next day; both were dead near each other. The old Squire Bodin was satisfied that it was Sam who killed the patrol and so badly wounded the other two, and had a writ for him; but the officers were a little slack about hunting for Sam. Mr. Ford had come home and went to see Mr. Bodin and found that his overseer had urged the investigation. The overseer lost his job, and Mr. Ford a very valuable hand, and Sam gained his freedom.

## CHAPTER XII

---

### A SLAVE HUNT TO WATCH THE KIRKS MILL BRIDGE

Some time late in the summer of 1852 a man rode hurriedly into Princeton, Indiana, covered with dust and his horse in a lather of sweat that showed evidence of hard riding. Tied to the back of his saddle were a number of large whips and several cords, and hanging to the horn were several pairs of handcuffs. A brace of heavy revolvers were belted around his waist outside his dusty coat. Altogether he was a fierce-looking fellow.

Dismounting, he tied his horse to the courtyard rack and hurrying to the south door of the old court house put on the bulletin board a notice of three runaway negroes, offering a reward of five hundred dollars for their capture. After doing this he inquired for the best tavern and had his horse taken to the liverystable. He made inquiry of any who lived there if there was anyone who would be willing to help him catch the runaways. Some time after he got to the tavern two gentlemen who were always boasting of the many times they had engaged in such work, called on him offering their services to help him catch the run-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

aways. The slave owner inquired about their experience in such business and they informed him that they had been in many such hunts. He told them they would do and if he got the negroes he would divide the reward which was offered, between five men; that all he wanted was their help in catching the rascals. He asked them who the other three men would be. There were several names mentioned to him of those who would be good help in such an undertaking. They mutually agreed on the three men when he enjoined them to secrecy. Only those going on the raid should know anything about what they intended to do. After this was arranged it was agreed that the first two men should come back to the tavern not later than four o'clock to let him know if the three men selected could be depended on to go. By that time he could secure some needed rest and they would mature a plan of action for the coming night.

The slave owner said that he felt certain the runaways would pass some where near Princeton during the early part of the night and aim to cross the Patoka river and get as far on toward White river as they could before daylight. He thought it best to guard one or two bridges over the Patoka and should they fail in capturing them he would organize a posse and picket White river

#### A SLAVE HUNT

at every point where it was thought likely they could cross. Pulling a small map from his pocket and looking over it for a short time he pointed out a route which he thought they would be most likely to follow. He pointed to Wheeling, (Kirksville) as the place he thought they would try to cross the Patoka river and said that he would go to that point with the five men selected and watch that bridge.

He authorized the two men, if they could find any reliable persons to guard the Columbia bridge for them to do so, as it might be possible they would go that way. Bidding the two men good bye he asked them to be prompt and report at the time named.

That the reader may understand the situation I will state that the slave-hunting bullies had made themselves so obnoxious to many good people in and around Princeton that this bogus slave hunt was inaugurated to teach them a needed lesson. The pretended slave owner was none other than an anti-slavery spy and he had five confederates who were well acquainted with the country and the people. The ones selected to guard the Wheeling bridge were the most offensive ones in that business. The anti-slavery confederates had eight heavy bombs made at Kratz & Heilman's foundry in Evansville which would hold about

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

three pounds of powder, each with a screw attachment so that a time fuse could be put into the powder.

As soon as it was dark the five men carrying the bombs started two hours ahead of the brave negro catchers. The first two bombs were placed near the side of the road in a deep hollow about two and a half miles northeast of Princeton; the next two were placed about three-fourths of a mile from the Wheeling bridge and the other four two on each side of the bridge, about sixty or seventy yards away. A man was left at each station to fire the fuse at the proper time and the extra man nearly a hundred yards from the bridge down the river to command an imaginary battalion. These bombs were the real thing for a great noise.

At four o'clock the two men were on hand and had the names of three men who would go out and watch the Columbia bridge; also said that the other men of their party would be ready at any time set for the start. The slave owner said that he did not care to see the three men who were to go to the Columbia bridge as he thought they had but little chance of success and he authorized the two men to see that they went, and for them and the other three of their party to meet him on the north side of the cemetery at

#### A SLAVE HUNT

one hour after night and they would go to the Wheeling bridge.

The party all assembled on time and then took the Wheeling road to the northeast for the bridge. There had been an agreed signal between the pretended slave owner and his confederates with bombs so he could locate their places, so when the bridge watching party got to the deep hollow of Indian creek, a deep loud voice some way to one side said—"Who goes there?" The men stopped and listened for some time but nothing more was heard. The leader turned to his posse and said—"Did you let it be known that we were going on this hunt?" They all said that they had not. He rode around and called several times but there was no response.

They then rode ahead and after passing several miles came to where the second station was located when from out of the woods to one side of the road in a deep sounding voice came the second challenge—"Who goes there?" The party stopped and the leader said in a loud voice "Who are you that you demand who we are?" He waited for some time but there was no more sound heard. The leader after locating the place well turned to his men and asked if they thought it could be possible that the abolitionists would attempt to defeat their plans. They all said they

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

did not think they had any idea of their movements. The leader said it was strange indeed that they should have been twice stopped by such an unearthly sound.

They rode on in silence to the bridge, crossed over it and went on watch on the north side, keeping the horses close at hand so they could mount if they needed to in a moment, as the slave owner told them the slaves would run and that there were two desperate characters in the lot. The brave slave owner had them watch closely. He would walk up and down both banks of the river pretending to be watching everything. Finally he came running up the bank and said—"Boys get on your horses. I am certain there is something going on. I heard a noise as of men slipping through the brush!" At this time one of his confederates called out—"Halt! dismount, let two men hold the horses! Get into line; shoulder arms!" At this time one of the bombs near the horses went off. The leader called—"Get over the bridge boys, the abolitionists will blow it down." At this another bomb exploded near them; this put the horses in a fearful panic and they went across the bridge at a great gait.

Soon the bombs on the north side exploded. The men were on the go and it was a half mile before the leader could stop them. Shaming them

#### A SLAVE HUNT

for such cowardice, they stopped and listened and hearing nothing marched on to where the last voice was heard, as they went to the bridge, and were listening; then the two bombs at this point were exploded within a few feet of them. After this there was no more halt and the man who fired the two bombs at Indian creek said he could not tell that they went any faster, as they were at top speed when they got to him. The leader tried to keep up calling to them to stop. They did not heed him for they had seen and heard enough for one night and ran all the way back to Princeton.

In 1865 a captain of the 143d Indiana regiment who for years after the war lived at and near Francisco, Indiana, and later moved west, while seated on the capital steps at Nashville, Tennessee, gave me the data for the above story. He said he was never so thoroughly frightened in his whole life as when the big bombs commenced to go off; it sounded as though the infernal regions had broken loose. Who the five men were who had charge of the bombs he never could learn but always believed that they lived in the Stormont and Carithers neighborhood northeast of Princeton. As he expressed it, it broke him of "sucking eggs" and if any of the other four men ever tried to catch a runaway negro afterward he never heard of it.

## CHAPTER XIII

---

### GEORGE STURGES

Two young fishermen who were in the employ of the Anti-Slavery League at Evansville, had an arrangement with George Sturges who lived near Spottsville, on Green River, to work for them of nights when he could get away. Early one night as George was going to see some negroes that he was at work with to help them gain their freedom, he came across five negroes who were going to the Ohio river and aimed to cross it. George told them that they had better follow him and he would take them to a place where they would be taken over and put in the hands of people who would see that they went to Canada. This they readily agreed to. When they reached the river opposite the City of Evansville, they could not see any light on the water. George hid the fugitives on the bank of the river in some brush and weeds, then went down the river looking for some way to cross it. He came to where two free negroes with a skiff who had been at a negro fandango on the south side, and persuaded them to set him over the river. He soon was at the fisherman's room (where he had been many times be-

GEORGE STURGES

fore) and had two skiffs after the fugitives. When they got back to the city they took the two women and three men to a negroe's home that they had always found willing to do all that he could to help his race. This man was Mr. Willard Carpenter's hostler and carriage driver. Mr. Carpenter was a very strong anti-slavery man and had told his hostler that he would aid a run away slave if they came to him for help. This hostler had told the fishermen what Mr. Carpenter had said. They had him tell Mr. Carpenter about the five fugitives at his home who wanted to go north, and see if he would let him have one of his teams and wagon to take them as far as one days journey. Mr. Carpenter said that he could have the teams if he would do as he dictated. This was agreed to, then Mr. Carpenter wrote a letter to Mr. Isaac Street telling him that he sent the five negroes to him to hide until he (Street) could have an opportunity to send them farther north. Willard Carpenter and Isaac Street had laid out the town of Dongola. Mr. Street lived there and had a small store. He and his good wife, Aunt Rachel, were Quakers and friends to the poor slaves. Mr. Street had helped to hide several bunches of runaway negroes. During the day Mr. Carpenter had his hostler get the wagon in shape with plenty of hay for beds. As soon as

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

it was night the negroes were loaded in and a heavy tarpaulin was spread over the wagon. The driver had driven Mr. Carpenter several times over the road from Evansville to Dongola, and was well acquainted with the route. It was an all night drive of full thirty miles and it was coming day when the negroes got to Mr. Street's and were placed in the cellar that was under the store room. At the time the negroes were getting out of the wagon there was a man that had some fishhooks set out at the river bank only a little ways from Mr. Street's house who passed and saw several people, but it was too dark to give any description of their color or sex. This fisherman went back to the town and related what he had seen. About noon that day two local negro hunters that lived near Princeton, Indiana, were in Dongola with an advertisement of five negroes—three men and two women that had run away from Henderson county, Kentucky, offering a reward of seventy-five dollars for each of the fugitives. It was but a little time until the report that the fishermen gave out about seeing so many people getting out of the wagon at Street's reached those brave slave hunters and they made many boastful threats of what they would do to the old Quaker for harboring slaves and hiding them from their masters. Some one told these brave fellows that

GEORGE STURGES

the men that got out of the wagon were all armed with rifles; this put a little damper on the negro hunters and they said that they expected that it would be best for them to get the sheriff before they attempted to go into Street's house, but they would go there and make the demand, and if he refused to give the runaways up they would go for the sheriff. Word was sent to Thomas Hart to come and bring a gun. Mr. Basil Simpson was lame and had learned the shoemaker's trade, he lived near the Dongola bridge, and was a full-fledged abolitionist and entered into the coming fun by taking or sending his rifle to Street's house. They had four guns there and when the men got within about twenty feet of the store door where Mr. Street was standing they said that by the authority the fugitive slave law gave them, they demanded of him to bring forth any fugitives from slavery that he was harboring and deliver them up to them under the pain of being arrested and put in prison. About this time the muzzles of four black rifles were thrust out of the two windows! At sight of the guns the two brave men did some sprinting that has never been equaled in this "neck of woods" before or since. They ran to where their horses were hitched and were on the road home in a short time. That night Thomas Hart and Wesley Simpson piloted

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

the three negro men to Dr. Posey's coal bank. The two women were sisters and sisters of two of the men. One of the women was sick and unable to go. Aunt Rachel said that she would take care of them. The woman became so very sick that Dr. Samuel D. McCullough was called in. The doctor was from South Carolina and at that time, no doubt, was pro-slavery in his sentiments. The situation was explained to him and he was requested to say nothing. The doctor said that a true physician never revealed a secret intrusted to him. The sick woman got better and was able to sit up. One afternoon Aunt Rachel thought it would be good for the convalescent to take a walk at the back of the house in her garden by the sister aiding her. During the time the two women were in the garden a woman from over the river in Pike county was at Mr. Street's store trading and saw them. After she got home she was relating to the family what she had seen. At that time a young man of their acquaintance was there. He had the reputation of being in many negro hunting expeditions. He soon excused himself and went away. The woman of the house was surprised at his action; she did not think about the negro women being slaves. Robert Hawthorn at that time had a large saw mill about three miles north of Dongola, on the Evansville

GEORGE STURGES

and Petersburg road and he had among his hands two young men who had been in many bridge watching and negro hunting scrapes, with Jack Kinman and others. The young man that left so hurriedly after learning of the two negro women being at Mr. Street's, went directly to Mr. Hawthorn's mill to see the two young men above mentioned. This trio made arrangements to raid Mr. Street's home the next night. One of the men was to see Jack Kinman and have him bring some help as they wanted eight or ten men. They aimed to meet on the road on the top of Slickum Hill at eight o'clock the next evening. Mitch Quiggins was Mr. Hawthorn's engineer. The young men made their plans in his presence as they expected him to go with them; but he excused himself as he was worked down, and asked them to get some one else. Mr. Quiggins was in sympathy with the anti-slavery people and as soon as he got a chance he explained everything to Mr. Hawthorn, where the men were to meet and what they aimed to do. At that time Wesley Simpson was hauling sawlogs with a team of three yoke of cattle for the mill. Mr. Hawthorn had Wesley to put his team in the barn, and get out a horse and saddle it to ride to his home and tell his father, Basil Simpson, to meet him at the point where the Winslow and Kirk's mill road is crossed by

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

the Evansville and Petersburg road at 7 o'clock that evening and to stay at home the next day as he would be needed by his father; but say nothing of what he was told. Mr. Simpson was at the appointed place and met Mr. Hawthorn who told him of the coming raid. It was decided that word would be sent to Thomas Hart and my father that night; also to Pink Adkins and Hiram Knight. My father sent me early the next morning to Mr. Street to do some trading in his store. I met Mr. Street, Thomas Hart and Mr. Simpson. We resolved in our meeting that we would not kill or cripple any one unless we had to to save ourselves, and that we would black our faces with wet powder to make them believe we were Cherry Grove free negroes. The same boys that were with us in the Jerry Sullivan raid at the Dongola bridge, Wm. B. Dill and Thomas Medcalf, were still working for us and would go that night. There was a man named Obadiah Naley who had drifted to Dongola with the workers on the Wabash and Erie Canal. This man claimed to be a Quaker and made his home at Mr. Street's. He was a very handy man with tools and owned a fine assortment of them so that he could do any kind of work in wood. He was quite a musician and had a very large assortment of musical instruments from a big brass drum to a fife and many

## GEORGE STURGES

of them he had made. In the collection he had seven or eight different patterns of dumb bulls. These instruments made the most terrible noise of any thing that I had ever heard before. Obadiah also had a flambeau arrangement that he called a kicking machine; this was a very complete affair. After being set in motion it was automatic in its actions. There was a strong square frame and twenty-four bent bows fastened to the bottom part of the frame. They were bent and fastened to the top of the frame with a string. On the end of each of the bows, there was a ball of some kind of twine saturated with an inflammable liquid. The only thing to do to set this machine in motion, was to set fire to the string that held the top end of the first bow, this soon burned in two, but not before it set the ball on fire. As soon as the string was in two the bow discharged the great ball of snapping fire thirty or forty feet in front of where it set. The first ball set the string to the second bow on fire and it thus continued until all the 24 were discharged. The inflammable ball seemed to come all to pieces and made a burning ball as large as a bushel basket. This flambeau machine was loaded and set near the corner of the storebuilding and firing it was to be Aunt Rachel's job. The Wabash & Erie canal run within about 75 yards of the store and had about four feet of water in

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

it; the tow-path was on the north side of the canal at this point and was about 40 feet from the little store, and the same distance from the kicking machine. Obadiah said that the two negro women and Mr. Street could help him with the music. The rest of the crowd, eight in number, would be (with our faces black as coal) in the garden with guns, for fear they might be in such number as to attempt to capture all of us. As soon as it was dark we were in our places. Mr. Simpson was the oldest man in the crowd and we chose him to take charge of the young men. Thomas Hart asked that he be placed near the bridge so that he could let us know when they crossed it, and how many there were. We did not have long to wait until we heard them crossing the bridge. Mr. Hart rushed up to where we lay and said that they would be there in two minutes and he thought there were twelve in the crowd. They come up the tow-path of the canal in true military style, two and two; when they got in front of the store they halted and all faced the store house. One man dismounted and said in a loud voice: "I will see if Mr. Street is at home." As soon as he started toward the house the most awful noise commenced! Obadiah had the dumb bulls in full blast; this made the horses skittish. The man on foot halted and turned back to his horse which he

GEORGE STURGES

mounted. The noise was so terrible that you could not have heard a cannon if one had been fired there. In a minute or two the kicking machine went into action! The first ball of fire fell among the horses and raised a great scuffle. The next one hit a horse and it reared straight up and threw its rider. The next two came close together and the horses stampeded, some into the canal and others down the tow-path whence they had come. There were four of the men that had control of their horses and were still near the store. At the sight of these men staying, Mr. Simpson ordered our men into line. At the sight of so many guns these fellows left in a hurry. We had our horses and were after them. Obadiah as soon as he was done with his part of the music got his gun and one of Street's horses and was soon up with us. When we got to the bridge we saw a lot of horsemen gathered in a bunch. Our commander said: "boys go for them," and we went! We ran them to Hawthorn's mill. We did not want to catch up with them, but wanted to show these bullies that they did not have it all their way.

The two women were in Aunt Rachel's care for more than a month. There were three men, two women and three children, sent to our barn cellar by Mr. Hansen from the station at Evansville, with the request that they be sent to Dr.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Posey's coal bank as soon as it was possible to get them there without running too much risk. We sent word to Aunt Rachel that we would be there at a certain time, and could take the two women if they were ready. When we got to Mr. Simpson's we found the two women and Aunt Rachel with them. She told them goodby with many good wishes for a successful journey. By midnight they were in Dr. Posey's coal bank and by that time the next night they were at one of the stations in northern Daviess county.

George was sent to Henderson, Ky., by his master with a load of tobacco. On going through the suburbs of Henderson, he passed by his mother's sister's little house. When his aunt saw him she came out to the wagon ringing her hands and crying. She told him that her children, John and Jane, had been sold to a cotton planter in the lower Mississippi country and that they just had that day to be with her before they were taken away. George did some quick thinking. John and Jane came out to the wagon. George said to the family, "If I help you will you swear that you will never give me away?" They readily gave the assurance. John and Jane were full grown people and belonged to a man different from the one that owned their mother. They had all their lives, since they could remember, worked in a tobacco

GEORGE STURGES

stemmery. George asked John, "do you remember the big oak tree that stands at the place where we caught the big coon that killed your little dog?" John said that he did. "If you and Jane will be there at 9 o'clock tonight, I will put you over the river and in the hands of friends who will send you to Canada. Will you be there?" After a hurried conversation with their mother they said they would be there. George said that it was not best for them to be seen talking together too much. He told his aunt if anyone came to inquire for John and Jane after they started to tell them that they were visiting some friends in another part of the town. It was late when George got home. That he might have a good excuse to get away he left his coat hid in a convenient place. He told his master that he had lost his coat, and asked him to give a patrol pass and let him go and look for it. This his master agreed to do. It was several miles to the appointed place of meeting and George wanted to get there as early as possible so that John and Jane would not be afraid when they got there. George did not have long to wait. It was not more than 9 o'clock when they set out for the Ohio river about 6 miles away. When they got there, they found that there were no skiffs. George had an agreed signal with the fishermen, (who at that time of night and up

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

to 12 o'clock would be looking out for signals). They usually run their lines and took off the catch just before midnight and rebaited their hooks. George set a turpentine ball on fire and threw it up into the air. This was answered from the middle of the river and in a little while the skiff was at the bank and the two refugee's were taken on board. George went over with them as he wanted to see what he could do for his cousins. George was put back over the river and it was nearly daylight when he got to his little shanty. He did not go to bed, but went to the barn and fed his team as he was sure he would have to haul a load of tobacco to Henderson that day. The hands that were stripping tobacco soon had George's wagon loaded. This gave him an early start for Henderson. When he got to where his aunt lived, she came out and he told her about John and Jane being in safe hands. This was good news. She said that soon after the children left the house, the man that had bought them came for them saying that a steam boat would be there in one hour and that they would go on it to their new home. She told him that they said they were going to bid some of their friends goodby, that they were expecting to stay all night with her. This seemed to enrage the brute, and he said, what was the difference whether they stayed

GEORGE STURGES

all night with her or not? She told him that she was their mother. "Yes," he said, "the cow is the mother of the calf, but that did not stop its being led to the butcher's block. The cow nor the calf have nothing to do in the case; they both belong to an owner, that is the same with negroes. They have nothing to say or do in the matter. They are property and belong to different owners. I will probably be detained here a week or more just to give my property a chance to say goodby to a lover." The owner, Mr. Jerry, waited there until the boat had passed and said that he would be there in the morning at 6 o'clock and he wanted her to have the children ready to go to jail as he would put them there for safe keeping until he had another chance to get away for home. The mother spent the night in dread. She was anxious about the children and was in fear of what the man might do to her. It was just six when she was called to the door by a loud knock. She found two men standing there one with two pair of hand cuffs and the other with a coil of rope in his hands. Mr. Jerry said for her to send the children out. She told him they had not come back yet. This made that slave bully so mad that he struck her a blow with the hand cuffs showing a bad wound on the side of her head. The other man whom she thought was the jailer told Mr. Jerry to stop,

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

that the woman was the property of another man and he had no right to hurt her without his consent. They went away, Mr. Jerry swearing vengeance against her and said that if she did not tell where the children were in hiding, "I will buy you from your master and put in my time torturing you when I get you to my home." George asked her why she did not run away too. She asked him how she could. He told her that it would be easy. "Did John leave any of his clothes there?" She said that both of the children had bundles of clothing in the house that they aimed to take with them south. "Now aunt you select a suit that fits you best and black your face and hands (she was a very bright mulatto) and put up a small bundle of your clothes that you would need most." And said that he would be back in about two hours and when she saw him coming to start down the street the way he was going, with her small bundle under her arm and he would pick her up and carry her away. This woman lived alone with a very vicious dog for protection, that she fed well just before she started, locking him in the house. Mr. Jerry did not seem to think that his negroes had run away, but thought they were in hiding with some other negroes who did not want them to go; and he thought that by desperate threats to the mother she would reveal

GEORGE STURGES

their hiding place. When George had his tobacco unloaded he started for home and as he was near his aunt's house he saw a black negro man come out of her gate and start along the street the way he was going; he drove slow until he got by all the houses and had come to the country where there was no house near. He then overtook his aunt. He could hardly believe his eyes for she did not look in any way like her, but looked like a strong black field hand. She got into the wagon and he said to her that he was nearly dead for sleep and would have to be up all that night and asked her to drive for him and let him lay down on the quilts that he had over the tobacco and sleep until he got to the little red church then for her to awaken him. The roads forked there. It was as much as two hours before they came to the church. As the woman drove very slow and George was sleeping so soundly she thought best to put in all the time she could to let him sleep. The two consulted together how best to proceed. They concluded that it would be best for his aunt to go with George until he got near the farm, then to hide her in a thicket that was near his master's fence and for her to stay there until it was dark when he would come with one of his master's gentle horses that he intended to steal out, and take her up behind him and hurry to the Ohio river

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

opposite Evansville. It was after sundown when George got his team put away and fed, and night before he had his supper. As soon as he thought it safe he slipped to the barn and got out and saddled one of the best horses on the farm and was soon at the thicket where his aunt was concealed, got her on the horse behind him and went away for the river. When he got there he found that by the light in the skiff that they were near the southern shore. He used the signal and was soon answered and a skiff was heard grating on the gravel just below where they stood. One of the fishermen came up the bank and George told him that this negro was his aunt in disguise and the mother of John and Jane. The fisherman told the mother that her children were still there and she should go to them and that the next night they would be sent north. George was soon on the road for home where he arrived about midnight. He got the horse back in the barn without a mishap and was soon asleep. George was up early and had his team fed and groomed and was ready for the trip to Henderson with a load of tobacco. When he got near his aunt's little house, he saw that the front door was down and the little fence in front was all broken down. Coming to the building he saw his aunt's big dog lying dead and there was evidence of a terrible scuffle. There was a



Dr. ANDREW LEWIS.

A Member of the Executive Committee of the Anti-Slavery  
League.



GEORGE STURGES

coat sleeve and half of the breast of a coat all covered with blood also a large piece of a shirt, with blood all over it. When George got to the tobacco house he learned that Mr. Jerry and a man he had hired to help him, had gone to his aunt's house and found the door locked. They got a heavy piece of timber and broke the hinges and the door fell down. The big dog first caught Jerry by the left breast and tore out a large piece of flesh to the bone. The next grab he made was for the face and tore nearly all of one cheek and one ear off. The dog would have killed his victim if some men passing had not helped him. They killed the dog with a heavy bludgeon. This bully had acted so domineering that there were but few who regretted his misfortune. The negroes around the tobacco factory were all showing an extra amount of ivory. George felt that the dog had avenged his aunt for the brutal lick that Jerry had given her with the handcuffs. The dogbitten man was very bad off and had sent to Mississippi for his brother who was a partner in the large cotton farm. The brother came and was said to be more brutal and domineering than his brother was. He went into a rigid examination to find some clue as to what had become of the two slaves that his brother had bought. George had finished hauling tobacco to Henderson sev-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

eral days, and was in the big barn of his master with some twenty other hands, packing tobacco in hogsheads and prizing it, when three or four men rode up, got off their horses, and came into the barn and inquired for George Sturges. He was in a hogshead at the time putting tobacco into it. They went up to the hogshead and told him to get out. They caught his hands and tied them behind his back. Two little white girls were at the barn and saw them tie George; they ran to the house and told Mrs. Jones, George's mistress what they had seen. She ran up to the barn just as they were getting ready to start way. She went to George and with a sharp knife cut the cord that held his hands. The brother of the wounded man told her that he would make her pay a fine for what she had done. She told him that if he did not get off the premises, she would have her slaves tie him to a post; that if George had done anything he should be punished for it; but the evidence must be forthcoming before they could take a man's liberties from him. She sent one of the hands to the house for her father who was at that time on a visit to his daughters. He was a fine looking middle aged man and was a Judge of the Federal Court for the district of Eastern Kentucky. He asked Jerry to show his authority for arresting the negro. He said he had

GEORGE STURGES

no direct evidence more than the people that are missing were his relatives and all they intended doing was to take him to the Henderson jail and try by torture to make him tell what he knew about the disappearance of the slaves his brother had bought and also of their mother. The Judge told them that before they had a right to do anything they had to have evidence of his guilt. There was a great deal of excitement in that part of Kentucky. George felt that he had done about all that he could do, except to gain his own freedom. He liked his master and mistress. They were good to him and he did not want them to have the loss of his value. His master had been offered \$1500 for him many times. There was one other slave named Rube Long that was owned by George's master that he wanted to help liberate. These two negroes found out that there was to be a slave trader in the neighborhood soon, (no class of men were so thoroughly hated by both white and black as these slave traders; they had done so many mean things that they had incurred this hatred from all). George told his master and mistress one night that he wanted them to sell him and Rube, and that he could get fifteen hundred dollars each for them. His master wanted to know if he was tired of living on the farm. George told him no, that he liked them so much that he

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

would not do them any harm, that he and Rube had seen the slave trader and told him that they wanted him to purchase them and take them south and that it would take three thousand dollars to get them, which the slave trader told them he would give if there was no mortgage on them. The slave trader came to see Mr. Jones and told him he would like to purchase the two likely negroes and that he would give him three thousand dollars for the two. Mr. Jones said that he hated to sell them but he would let him have them. The papers were drawn up and a clean bill of sale was drawn up by Mr. Jones and the cash paid for it. There was to be a boat at the Spottsville Landing the next evening at 9 o'clock to take them to Evansville where they would be shipped on a large boat for the far south at 12 o'clock that night. The slave trader had made arrangements with George and Rube to help him watch the negroes and help him keep them in a body when they were unloaded at Evansville. In all there were sixteen negroes. George and Rube went among the slaves and told them to do as they directed them, that it would be for their interest. When the little boat got to Evansville the negroes were unloaded on to a wharf boat and all huddled up in one corner with George and Rube guarding them. It would be two hours before the big steam-boat

GEORGE STURGES

would be there. The slave trader came to the negroes huddled in the corner of the wharf boat, and told them to stay there and do as George and Rube told them to, that he was going up in town to get some supper and something to drink and that he would bring them some whiskey when he came back, which would be before the steamer was due. As soon as Rube and George were satisfied that he was gone they told the negroes to follow them that they intended to see that they went to Canada and to freedom. George ran ahead and found one of the fishermen who gave him the names of several negro families that had helped them often in hiding negroes. There was an old unused coal mine in the southwest part of the city that was dry and would hold a hundred men; if they could hide them in the city until a late hour of the night, they then could take them in squads to the coal mine. Mr. Hansen was in the City and the fishermen conferred with him. He advised that they be taken to the coal bank and kept there until the next night when they would be sent north. When the slave trader got back to the wharf boat he was pretty full and he was not certain where he had left the negroes. He found P. G. O'Riley the owner of one of the wharf boats and soon got into a row with him. O'Riley had a policeman to take charge of him and put him

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

in the cooler. The next morning when he was sober he told the Mayor, Wm. Baker, that he had 16 negroes that he left in charge of two trusted negro men and that he did not know what had become of them. One of the wharf boat hands was there for a witness against the slave trader for raising a row with P. G. O'Riley. He told the mayor that when the big New Orleans boat got to the wharf, that two negro men marched a dozen or more negroes on to that boat. The mayor advised him to take the next boat and follow his slaves.

Mr. Hansen was a little solicitous about getting so many negroes in one bunch away to the north without some trouble. He knew that it would probably be ten days before the slave owner of the sixteen men would get back to Evansville on the hunt for his slaves and up to that time there would be no inquiry about them as it was thought they had gone on the steamer that the wharf boat clerk said he had seen them go on. Mr. Hansen during the next morning met with Dr. Andrew Lewis of Princeton, who was in the city. They were well acquainted and understood each other. The E. & T. H. Railroad was then building from Princeton to Vincennes, and was some distance over White river. Mr. Hansen hoped that he could charter a freight car that would take him and two guards and sixteen

### GEORGE STURGES

negroes over White river, then he could take them to a secure station east of Vincennes. Hansen was not acquainted with Judge Hall the president of the railroad, so he approached Dr. Lewis and asked him what he thought the prospects would be to charter a stock car and have it leave Evansville after night. The doctor told Hansen to leave that to him and he would meet him at an agreed place. Dr. Lewis was well acquainted with Mr. Hall's anti-slavery principles and had no trouble in getting the car. Mr. Hansen was to take his saddle horse and two guards, a horse each in the car. They made a partition in one end of the car so that the fugitives could not be seen by the conductor or anyone else and made strong stalls in the other end for their three horses. There was to be a lot of material for the road sent up early that night and the car with the stock was to go with that train. This was done and Mr. Hansen's car was put on a new switch some miles north of Decker Station. At a late hour that night the stock and fugitives were unloaded and hurried to the refuge station.

This was the last of George Sturges as far as the author knows. He was a true man to his race and was honorable. His master and mistress had been good to him and he did not intend that they should lose his value and that of Rube's,

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

as both of them had resolved to go north and to freedom, so they took their time and when they learned that a slave trader was in that section, they went to see him and made him believe that they wanted to go south. They set a price on themselves and got his promise that he would see their master the next day and buy them. They then went to their master and pleaded with him to sell them. The master knew that they did not want to go south and thought that it might be best for him to get their value while he could, so he sold them. Mr. Hansen said that George told him that if the slave trader had kept with them and given them no chance to give him the slip, they intended to kill him and throw him into the river.

## CHAPTER XIV

---

### DR. JOHN W. POSEY AND REV. ELDRIDGE HOPKINS RELEASING KIDNAPPED NEGROES

Along in the early part of the fifties two free negro men who lived in northern Kentucky, not far from Rockport, Indiana, had been working on the Wabash and Erie canal between Washington and Terre Haute, for some time, and had determined to go to their homes and had got as far as Washington on their way there when they fell in with a man who seemed very friendly to them asking them where they were going. When they told him he told them that he and a friend of his were going in the same direction nearly to the Ohio river in a wagon and that if they wanted to they could go with them and it would not cost them anything for the ride; that they would have provisions with them for the trip and they could assist in preparing it but that they would not be ready to start before three or four in the afternoon.

The offer was a very favorable one to the two negroes and they gladly accepted it and said they would be at an agreed point at the south

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

side of Washington, where the two men with the wagon found them.

They took the Petersburg road and it was late in the evening when they crossed the White river at the ferry. Mr. John Stucky, who crossed at the same time, knew one of the white men and at once suspected what he was up to but could not draw him into a conversation and could not get a chance to talk to the colored men as he had hold of his horse. He heard them tell the ferryman that they would stay all night in a wagon yard in Petersburg. After they were over, the wagon traveled pretty fast. Mr. Stucky did not keep up with it and reached Petersburg some time after it had put up at the wagon yard. Stucky hunted up Dr. John W. Posey, who was the father of Hon. Frank B. Posey, and told him about the white men and negroes that were stopping at the wagon yard. The doctor at once understood the situation and sent a spy to the wagon yard to see what he could find out. The spy soon reported that he found them eating supper and that a noted hotel keeper was some distance away engaged in conversation with one of the men.

He talked with the negroes, who said that their homes were in Kentucky and that these men were letting them ride in the wagon most of the way. They had no evidence but the doctor re-

## RELEASING KIDNAPPED NEGROES

solved to have a watch kept and have the wagon followed up to see what developments might come. About two hours before day the guard who had been on watch came hurriedly to the doctor's home and told him they were ready to start and had their team hitched to a three seated express wagon and that the hotel man was with them and two other fellows whom he did not know. The doctor had three horses saddled and sent for a neighbor to ride one of them and one of his hired hands rode another and the doctor the third one. All three were armed. They sent the guard back to watch and report but the express and men had gone. Mr. Posey and the other men hurried on after them on the Winslow road but did not overtake them as they had passed through Winslow a little after sunrise and thirty minutes ahead of the pursuing party. They followed on after them meeting a man about two miles south of Winslow who said he had met the express about one mile south of where they were and that they had two runaway negroes tied together. As there were only three of them and four of the kidnappers and it was supposed that men on such a business would go well armed, they did not feel as if they had an equal chance, but they knew that justice was on their side so they resolved to follow on and when they stopped they would find some one

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

legally qualified to try the case and liberate the poor negroes.

About this time they met Rev. Eldridge Hopkins who told them that he passed the express but a short mile south of where they were and they inquired of him if he could tell them where there was a spring as they wanted to eat an early dinner and feed their horses as they were getting fatigued. Hopkins thought nothing of it as men with runaway negroes were a common occurrence in those days. Dr. Posey told Rev. Hopkins, with whom he was well acquainted, the situation and Hopkins, who was in favor of justice and was good grit all the way through, offered to pilot them around the men if they stopped to feed so that they would be in front of them and could go to a Justice of the Peace on the road a few miles ahead and have papers prepared to stop them and release the negroes.

Coming to the road at the point Hopkins intended, they found that the express had not passed, but they learned that the squire they wanted was away from home and before they could find a legal light who could give them the right to stop the kidnappers they got into Warwick county, where a writ was secured. When the express came up a constable halted them and marched them into a Justice's court. At first the

## RELEASING KIDNAPPED NEGROES

kidnappers were disposed to threaten but by this time a number of men had gathered around in front of them. These fellows were completely nonplussed by the action of Dr. Posey. The two negroes were brought into court and told their story. Dr. Posey retold what the colored men told his man the night before while one of the white men was eating supper with them. The crowd was very much in sympathy with the two unfortunates.

The man who claimed to own them showed a hand bill giving a perfect description of the two men and offering a reward of two hundred dollars for their recapture dated at a point in Tennessee some weeks before. This hand bill was no doubt printed at Washington the day before, while these negroes were waiting for their new found friends. Things now began to look pretty bad for the poor negroes. Hopkins was a ready talker and he volunteered to defend them and made a telling speech in which he had the sympathy of all not interested. The old Justice was against the negroes and he decided that they were nearly all slaves and those who claimed their homes in a slave state were all slaves and whereas their owner had produced a notice of them that had a perfect description and dated several weeks before he would

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

let him (the supposed owner) go with his property.

This infuriated Hopkins and he told Dr. Posey that he would see that the men did not get over the Ohio river with the negroes. While Mr. Hopkins and Dr. Posey were having a consultation, Mr. Hopkins discovered that he had his foot on the hub of a wheel of the express the kidnapers had come in and saw that the wheels were held on with linch pins and that he could easily get one of them out, which he did and put it in his pocket. It was decided that it was best for the doctor and his two men to return home. Hopkins said that in that crowd he could find all the men he wanted to go with him on the raid so having chosen them they secured arms and were soon on the go.

Starting off in an easterly direction they soon found a road which brought them to the Boonville road and found that the express had not passed. They took powder and made themselves as black as Nubians; no one would have recognized them. Mr. Hopkins thought that the express might get some distance before the wheel would come off.

They waited for a time but finally started up the road and saw the express with one wheel off about one mile south of where the old squire lived.

## RELEASING KIDNAPPED NEGROES

When they got close to the express they rushed up hurriedly and demanded to know what they had the negroes tied for. The negroes told them that they were kidnapped. The rescuing party leveled their guns at the three white men and made them hold up their hands. One of them had gone back to look for the linchpin. The negroes were untied and the white men searched for guns. They found three old pepper box revolvers of a pattern of that date and several knives. They also found a fine rifle in the bottom of the express. The negroes were made to tie the three men and they all sat down out of sight until the fourth man came back when he was also tied. They then organized a stump court martial to try the kidnappers.

The negroes first told their story as has been above related. The four men were told that they, one at a time could tell their side of the case. The would-be owner produced the hand bills that Dr. Posey told Mr. Hopkins were made in Washington. Mr. Hopkins who was the leading spokesman told them that this was the case and said that that was the worst feature in it.

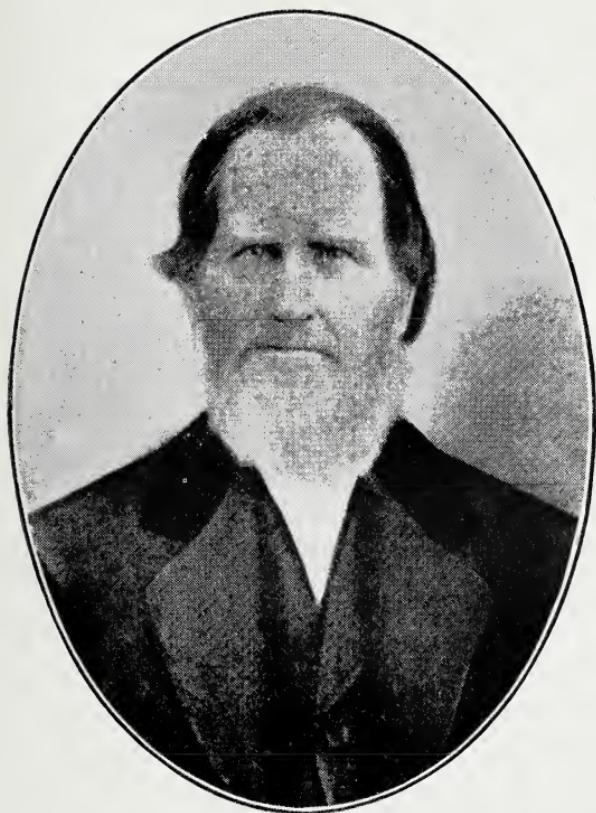
The court after hearing all the evidence decided that all four of them should die, for such villainy was a menace to good order and the peace of society but told them that any one of them

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

who would tell the whole truth should live. At this one of the men commenced to weaken when the leader told him to remember the oath he took when he was hired and the penalty if he violated that obligation. At this Hopkins took the fellow who seemed ready to tell something away from the rest and where they could not hear and told him that if he would tell the whole truth that his life would be spared. On this assurance he told all he knew. He said that the pretended owner lived at Washington, Indiana, and that it was intended to carry the negroes to Mississippi country and sell them. He also said that they had agreed to pay him and another man whom they hired at Petersburg, one hundred dollars each to go with them and watch the two negroes until they were sold; and that the team belonged to the leader who pretended to own the negroes.

Mr. Hopkins took the man back to the party and put the negroes guard over them. He then re-assembled the court martial and they held another consultation after which he told the white prisoners that they deserved to die for such villainy but they did not want their blood on their hands and had decided not to kill them, but they intended to give them an object lesson they would remember all the rest of their lives.

Hopkins took the leader and the two negroes



REV. ELDRIDGE HOPKINS.



## RELEASING KIDNAPPED NEGROES

out in the woods some distance west of the road, cut two good-sized hickory gads and told the negroes to give him twenty-five hard lashes each which they did with a will. They untied the fellow, who was evidently well whipped and told him to go in a north-west direction and not to stop or look back. Then he took the other man from Washington and two negroes to the east side of the road, cut two gads, gave him fifty lashes, untied him and told him to go to the north-east and not to stop or look back under penalty of being shot. The two men who had been hired they gave ten lashes each and then turned them loose toward Evansville. Mr. Hopkins and his party held a final conference and then had the negroes put the wheel on having given them the linchpin. They decided to turn the team over to the two negroes with the pepper box revolvers and the rifle to defend themselves, deciding that they had undergone enough torture to have all the spoils. By this time it was an hour after dark. The two darkies drove away and these rude but just judges went to their homes.

Some ten days after the events above recorded Mr. Hopkins went to Petersburg and visited Dr. Posey. They sent a man to Washington to find out what he could about the two villains who attempted the kidnapping. He learned that

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

they got back the day after they were so soundly thrashed and reported they had fallen in with a band of horse thieves who had beaten them fearfully and taken from them their team and everything else they had.

Some time after this Mr. Hopkins was working for the company that built the first steam mill in Oakland City getting out rock for the foundation. In tamping a charge of powder it went off prematurely and came very near putting his eyes out. He remained for three weeks at my father's home perfectly blind, but otherwise in the best of health. During that time he related this story to my father giving all the details except the names of any but Dr. Posey. My father and Dr. Posey were friends and he asked the doctor about it. The doctor said that it was the best planned expedition of the kind that he had ever heard of and to the Rev. Eldridge Hopkins three-fourths of the credit was due for its successful ending.

## CHAPTER XV

---

### JOHN BUNDAY WAS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY LEAGUE

After Jeff Lewis went to Canada, Job Turner was at a loss to know how he could be of any service to the Anti-Slavery League. Jeff had told Turner of a wide awake negro that lived near Calhoun, Ky., named John Bunday, who he felt sure would be true and competent to do the work. Turner as well as others had found out that slaves could do much better work and were safer than for white men to do it. Every slave wanted his freedom and when any one approached him on that subject, he knew he was a friend and was working for his good and if he was so situated by family or otherwise that he could not go, he would keep the secret safe. Turner went on with his peddling and was showing his goods to some negro woman near Calhoun, Ky., one day he heard one negro woman say to another that John Bunday would likely be sold to a man in Mississippi, as his master owed a man there one thousand dollars. Turner asked the woman who John Bunday was and where he was. She pointed out a man daubing a shanty near by and said that he was

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

John Bunday and that he was the smartest man on the farm. Turner went to the place where the man was working and pretended to show him some goods and said to him, "John I would like to talk with you if we can get a chance to get together secretly." John asked him where he was to stay that night. Turner told him at a hotel in Calhoun, John told him at 9 o'clock he would pass the hotel for his home, and if Turner was on the sidewalk he would talk to him if there was no patrols around. At 9 o'clock John come walking slowly along the sidewalk and when he got up to where Turner was he stopped. Turned said to him: "Jeff Lewis said that you was a good fellow and would do to trust and I would like to see you for an hour or so where there is no danger of any one knowing it." John replied: "The house you saw me daubing is less than a quarter of a mile from here. I will be there in twenty minutes. I feel that it will be safe for you to come and see he there. If I find that it is not safe, I will be sitting in the door and the house lit up." Turner went to the house along a little path as directed by John and found the house dark and safe. Turner was a little shy. John told him to feel free and safe that he knew of Jeff's work, and he would do the same kind of work and was ready to commence at once. The only thing he asked as recompense

## JOHN BUNDAY'S WORK

was that when he had done all that it was safe for him to do that he might have a chance to get away and take his sister with him. This was agreed to and John said that he would do his first work between Calhoun and Owensboro. Turner told John that he would be on his return trip in ten days and would come to his house that night and if he had any travelers ready they would make arrangements for their northern march. John had been hired out by his master in a section about half way between Owensboro and Calhoun, and was well acquainted with a negro preacher in that section that had great influence with the colored people. John dodged the patrols one night and went to see the preacher and found him willing and anxious to help in the work. He told John that the whole neighborhood would go. They talked the matter over and agreed on ten men that would try to get through. The preacher was to see them and have them ready when he gave them the word. John was to see the preacher the night after Turner should see him. Turner came to John's house at the time he said he would and found out the wholesale drive that John and the preacher were likely to have ready to go to Canada. It was agreed that there must be great caution used as such a loss as ten laborers out of one neighborhood would create a stir, and extra

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

efforts would be made to capture the fugitives. They agreed on a meeting place about six miles from Owensboro where the guards and guides would be on the next Tuesday night. The preacher had John to exact a promise from Turner that before winter set in, he, his wife and a fifteen year old daughter should have a chance to win their freedom by the underground route. Tuesday night came around and five guards and guides and ten negroes were on hand. The preacher held a short prayer meeting, then shook hands with all of them bidding them all to look to God for the success of their undertaking. John and the preacher returned to their respective homes, the negroes and guards went to a place east of Owensboro where two anti-slavery guards had a fishing shack. They found two skiffs and although they had to make two trips with the skiffs they were soon on the north bank of the Ohio river. They immediately started to march to the immense thicket about 10 miles north of the river that has been a resting place for so many runaway negroes. They went into the thicket quite a way; it was a wild tangled mass of grape vines hazlenut bushes and briars. The large timber had all been blown down in a hurricane. It was some time before day when they got into the thicket though they could have gone several miles

## JOHN BUNDAY'S WORK

further if there had been a suitable place to hide. One of the guards that was acquainted with the route went to see Mr. Caswell to make arrangements for the feeding of the fifteen people early that evening, so that they could get to our barn cellar before day the next morning. As soon as the shades of night came on they were on the go. The night was very dark which was fortunate for them, for with many people on a road on a bright night they would be seen by some one. When they got near Mr. Caswell's farm, they met him with two large baskets of food. It was thought best not to go near the house. Mr. Hill was there and enjoined the most perfect quiet on all, as a false move might endanger their prospective liberties. After supper was over they were on the march along a small road that Mr. Hill was acquainted with. Everything went well and it was an hour before day when the fugitives got into our big barn cellar. Mr. Hill made himself known and my father told him that great caution was necessary, that the loss of so many negroes from one neighborhood would raise a great commotion and many men would be sent in all directions to hunt for them. Mr. John Hanson was staying at our house that night and was surprised when he found out that ten negro men were in our cellar. The five guards were in our barn-loft where our wheat

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

and hay was stored, resting. One of them was all the time on guard looking out to see what went on around our farm. Breakfast for the fugitives was sent to the barn. Mr. Hill ate in our house. My father, Mr. Hansen and Mr. Hill held a consultation to find what was best to do. One false step would ruin all our calculations and endanger our liberties.

For two days before that we had been tramping out wheat with horses on the barn floor over the cellar and had piled the wheat in the chaff in the center of the floor ready for the fanning mill. The last floor full that we had tramped out with horses had not been moved from the floor and made a perfect screen for the cellar door. Everything went on as usual until just before noon six men rode up to our house and called for my father who came out to the men and found that he was acquainted with one of them. (I now think it was Mr. Williams. In the winter of 1861 just before the battle of Ft. Donaldson, I was with my regiment at Calhoun, Ky. and during that time my father visited me and we went to see this Mr. Williams, who then was selling goods. I bought a pair of boots from him). My father and Mr. Williams had been friends during the flat-boating period and both had run many boats to the lower Mississippi country loaded with provisions. He

#### JOHN BUNDAY'S WORK

greeted my father very cordially and told him that he was with quite a number of men looking to see if they could find any clue to what had become of ten likely negro men that had disappeared from the country between Calhoun and Owensboro last Tuesday night. My father invited Mr. Williams to get off his horse and come into the house. He declined, saying there were too many of them for a social visit; that they had plenty of provisions for themselves in their saddle-bags, but they would like to get a good feed for their tired horses. At that time what is now the campus on which the Oakland City College buildings stand was a feed lot that we used to fatten our cattle in every fall and there were boxes on posts for thirty or forty head to eat out of. In a short time several more men rode up, Mr. Williams explained to my father that when they all got in there would be twenty-five horses to feed. I took the two largest of the colored boys that were staying with us and went to the crib and filled up three sacks of corn, enough to give the horses a full feed. My father walked down to the feed lot with his old flat-boat friend. As we were delivering the corn, one rough looking fellow stopped the two colored boys and commenced to ask them many questions. My father and Mr. Williams approached when father explained how he came to

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

have the boys. Mr. Williams went to the bully and told him what father had told him. This did not seem to pacify him and he said he believed that they were slaves being wrongfully detained from their owners. Mr. Williams rebuked the bully, telling him that he was trying to insult his friend and told him that if he was to make any attempt to do anything with the boys, he would never get out of that lane alive, pointing to the lane that ran by our house. Others of the slave hunters went to the bully, who no doubt was full of whiskey, and tried to quiet him. As soon as their horses were done eating they were ready to go. Mr. Williams told my father that they had at least one hundred men hunting for the negroes or for some clue as to how or where they went. He further said that during the last three months a large number of slaves had left their masters, and not the least clue as to where or how they went away had been found. It seems as if they had blown away. He said that he did not own any slaves at that time, but was with his neighbors and customers trying to help them. Mr. Williams asked my father if he would let them have some one to guide them; they wanted to get on the road that runs from Boonville to Petersburg. Father went into Mr. Hansen's room and he said that he would go as far as Winslow

## JOHN BUNDAY'S WORK

with them, as he wanted to go into that neighborhood. He had his horse brought and was ready to go. He was introduced to Mr. Williams as a real estate agent, for a distant company. When they were out of sight there was a feeling of relief to all. Mr. Hill had the military part of our crowd in good shape; fortunately it was not needed. Everything was quiet until late in the evening one of Mr. Hansen's spies rode up to our house and inquired for him. We told him that he had gone away at noon, but he would be back at six o'clock that evening. It was then 5:30. We told him that he had better get off his horse and wait until Mr. Hansen came. He saw one of the guards that he knew, and then was soon at ease. None of our people had ever seen him before. Mr. Hansen was soon seen coming. The information that the spy brought was that late in the night a wagon would be here from the Calvert neighborhood with three negro men, two negro women and three children. They had crossed the river at Evansville, and were carried to a thicket in one of the Calvert corn fields. They were afraid to try to go north to the next station on that route, as it was reported that there were many men in Princeton hunting runaway negroes, and it was thought best to bring them into this neighborhood and have Mr. Hansen make arrange-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

ments for their trip north. One of the guards was to notify Mr. Hansen when the wagon with the negroes arrived, which he did sometime after midnight. The wagon was unloaded and at once started back. It was driven by one of the anti-slavery guards. The negroes were put in the cellar where proper arrangements had been made for them early in the evening. The next morning Mr. Hill, Mr. Hansen and my father consulted together what was best to do. It was decided that there was so much excitement in all sections near there that it was thought best to lay still until it had calmed down a little. It was a big proposition to cook for and feed so many people. But provisions were plenty and cheap and one of the negro women was taken from the barn to our kitchen to help the women there. It had been determined that the negroes should go north in two or three days and that they would cross the Patoka river some miles west of the Dongola bridge, crossing on a flat bottomed boat that belonged to Thomas Hart. It was thought that the negro hunters would be going home on Sunday and that night the negroes would start, the two women and the children would stay in the cellar until they could be got away later when a better opportunity was found to send them without such a long march on foot. It was feared that the children could not

#### JOHN BUNDAY'S WORK

stand such hardships. Mr. Hansen established all the stations at points he thought most suitable. The station that he was aiming to take the negroes to was where he had to import a man and wife to take a lease on a small piece of land at or very near where the town of Dugger is now located. Sunday night the thirteen negro men and five guards and Mr. Hansen started north under the guidance of Thomas Hart, who was to go with them until they crossed White river, which they did on a barge that had been left to be filled with corn; it was borrowed by Dr. Posey from a friend. They crossed the river a little east of Beunavista. After they were over White river, Mr. Hansen sent the five guards to their station, and aimed to find a place in eastern Knox county that he knew of, to stay the next day. He intended to go with the men for three or four days until he could get them out of danger of being recaptured. It was four days before Mr. Hansen returned. He said he had placed the thirteen travelers in the hands of friends who would see them safe on the anti-slavery boat on Lake Michigan. He had come by the way of Petersburg to see Dr. Posey and learned that he had two men and their wives and two children in his coal bank. They had been carried over the Ohio river near the mouth of the Little Pigeon where the anti-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

slavery people had a station and kept skiffs convenient. Mr. Hansen had made arrangements with Dr. Posey to hold his people in the coal bank until the people in our cellar could get to him which he thought would be that night. When night came on we had the wagon with the fish boat on it. With two of our hands that had been with me on many such trips and with our guns we were soon on the road for Dr. Posey's coal bank. When we got near Petersburg we met Mr. John Stuckey who was on the lookout for us. We soon had the negroes in safe quarters and were on the road for home.

John Bunday had seen Turner and it was thought best to do his next work nearer the Ohio river, as the slaves were being watched so closely it was difficult to get away early in the evening, and it was so far to the river that it was close work to get over it before daylight. John was passing near the shanty of a negro woman who often helped the white folks of his master. She called to him and said: "John, if you will give me your promise that you will not tell anyone I will tell you something that you ought to know." The promise was readily given when she said: "Yesterday I was helping your mistress clean house when a strange man rode up and called for your master. They went into the room adjoining the

## JOHN BUNDAY'S WORK

one we were in. The sliding doors between the rooms had been taken down to clean. The two men were in there for a good while and I heard your master say, 'If you will give me John's work for sixty days I will do it,' saying that he had a cellar that he wanted walled with stone. (John was a stone mason). The man said to your master that he was afraid to do it as he might run away as there had been so many runaways from northwest Kentucky recently. Your master said that John was as staid as a work-horse and never had such a thing in his head as running away. The man finally agreed that you might stay with your master thirty days. A long paper was drawn up and signed by your master and given to the man when he in turn gave your master a small paper. I heard the strange man say that it was a little over due, but he would not claim any interest. After they were gone your mistress said that she hated to see John go away as he was such an agreeable good fellow."

John had heard the rumor that his master owed a man in Mississippi one thousand dollars and he felt sure that he had been sold to that man or his agent to pay that debt. His master put him to hauling stone from a quarry, a few miles away, to wall the cellar. He was very anxious to see Turner, who would not be due there on his re-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

turn trip until the following Tuesday night; this was Friday. He went on hauling rock. At the quarry John saw a boy who was hauling rock to the farm, adjoining the one the negro preacher (before mentioned) lived on, and sent word for him to come to a colored meeting house near Calhoun where a prayer meeting was to be held. John was there and the negro preacher came. After the meeting John had a chance to talk to him and told him of the great calamity that was about to befall him; and further told him that he was ready now to redeem his promise to help liberate him and family as he and Turner agreed to do; that he was determined before the thirty days were up to take his sister and try to gain their liberty. The preacher was willing to make the effort to go to Canada, and said that he would manage in some way to be at John's shanty the next Tuesday night to meet with him and Turner. John had seen his sister that Sunday evening; she was owned by a man that lived several miles nearer the Ohio river than he. He explained to his sister the trouble he was in and he told her that late Tuesday night after he had the meeting with Turner he would be there to see her and tell her where and when they would go; and would come to her shanty door and for her to keep awake till he came. This sister had a lot of good clothes; she wanted him



JOBE TURNER

Who worked south of the Ohio river for the Anti-Slavery  
League.



## JOHN BUNDAY'S WORK

to tell her what to do with them; he said for her to wear as many of her best dresses as she could get on and leave the rest. Turner arrived on Tuesday evening and was at John's shanty. The preacher was there, also. It was decided that they should meet Thursday evening at a cross-roads where there was a small log negro church, about six miles south of the Ohio river and a little south-east of Owensboro, Ky. Turner said that he would have guides there to pilot them to a place where they could cross the river and to take charge of them. The negro preacher wanted permission to take several of his congregation with him and especially one young man who was a prospective son-in-law. Permission was given to him to let one man and his wife into the secret besides the young man and to have them with him at the meeting place. John's master had always been severe with him, but his mistress was his friend and he would do anything he could for her. John sought a chance to talk with her and asked her if his master had sold him to a man in Mississippi. She said to him that it must not be known that she had told him, but his master had got in debt to a man in that state for one thousand dollars and he was pressed to sell him or the farm to pay it; that in the trade it was agreed that his master could have him to work for thirty days or until

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

the cellar was completed. John told her that he would kill himself before he would go to Mississippi. She tried to persuade him not to think of doing such a thing, that he was young and had the promise of a long life before him. John was apparently very gloomy and started to leave; he told her that he was very thankful for the many acts of kindness she had done him, but that he could not go to Mississippi. His mistress was in real trouble and said, "John you must not think of destroying your life. If I will tell you what is best for you to do, will you swear before God that you will never reveal it to a human?" John said he would. She told him that the man who paid the thousand for him was wealthy and would not miss the loss, why not do as many have done in this part of Kentucky recently, run away. "I will give you a pass that the patrol will let you pass on anywhere, and give you some money, say twenty-five dollars." John told her he would try it. She gave him the pass and the money and told him she wished him God-speed in his undertaking.

Thursday night five guards were in hiding near the little church some time before any others made their appearance. The negro preacher, two men and three women came and were put in a concealed place. Soon after this John Bunday and his sister came, making four negro men and four

## JOHN BUNDAY'S WORK

negro women and five guards. The guards were armed with short breech-loading Sharp's rifles that could be carried in such a manner that they were concealed by their coats. They were soon on the march along a by-way known to the guides. Soon after midnight they were at the river, which they crossed in skiffs and then went on to the great thicket so many times described and went into it for quite a distance until they found a good place to sleep. As soon as night came they resumed the march for Mr. Caswell's where they found a steaming supper that they made good use of. Mr. George Hill was there and as soon as they had finished eating he took charge. The two guards that belonged to the Owensboro station went back, the other three guards and the eight negroes were soon on the march and just a little while before day they came to our large corn field that came up to our barn and were soon in the barn cellar where they found good soft beds of straw.

Mr. Hansen had learned of John Bunday from Job Turner, and had expressed a wish to see him when he was making the attempt to get to Canada. Mr. Hansen's time to be at my father's house was over due and we hoped he would come during the day. It was late in the afternoon and we were planning how best to get the fugitives to the next

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

station. There were many men riding all over this part of the country hunting the runaway slaves for the large rewards offered for them. There was hardly a bridge of any size that was not watched by two or three men almost every night except Saturday and Sunday; we found out they usually went to their homes and not many of them returned before Monday. While we were eating supper Mr. Hansen rode up, he had come from the eastern part of his work and had been riding all day. When told that John Bunday was with the fugitives he went to the cellar to see him. Turner had told Hansen that Bunday said that as soon as he landed his sister safe in Canada he would come back and hide in some of the border towns, most likely Evansville, as he knew the country south of that city, and from there could carry on the work as he had been. Hansen made arrangements with him to write as soon as he was ready to come, and he would send him money for transportation via Chicago to Evansville. Mr. Basil Simpson went to Petersburg that day and saw Dr. Posey and informed him that the negroes were coming; and after he returned home he would meet us one mile south of the Dongola bridge. By this time it was dark and we had two wagons on the road. We met Mr. Simpson and he told us that Mr. John Stucky would meet us

## JOHN BUNDAY'S WORK

at the place where we turned off the Petersburg road for the river; that there was so much negro hunting it was best to take no chances. He also said that the Dongola bridge was not watched. Nothing unusual happened on the road, and about 11 o'clock we were at the river where we found that Dr. Posey had perfected all arrangements for crossing. There were conveyances on the north bank and the negroes were soon on the way to the next station.

Mr. Hansen went with us to the river, as he wanted to talk with Bunday and the negro preacher. As Turner had told him, these two men were the most valuable help since Jeff Lewis went away and he thought it would be hard work to replace them. In talking it over John told of a man that he knew who lived near Diamond Island Station that he thought would soon be a good man to help the traveling men on the route. This traveling man, named Lem Fisher, was an old-fashioned clock tinker. He had an additional trade, that of tinner, and carried his heating bucket and charcoal and also soldering irons with him. This man went over a large scope of country and worked on clocks, watches and tinware in all sorts of homes.

## CHAPTER XVI.

---

### THOMAS JEFFERYS

In 1853 there was a slave-trader from the lower cotton country who came to the section of country northeast of Lexington to purchase as many as thirty slaves. He went to that part of Kentucky where the people enjoyed good health and long life because he wanted good strong healthy men that would make good field hands. He also wanted to purchase as many as twenty-five or thirty double teams of mules. This trader had a man with him to help take care of the mules and watch over the negroes on their way home. The trader was paying fancy prices and secured quite a number of slaves in that section of Kentucky. He had bought two fine, likely, very light mulattoes from a woman whose husband was temporarily away from home. It was said by the people of the neighborhood that these two fine looking mulattoes were the children of the absent husband, hence the wife desired to turn them into cash and rid herself of their presence. This woman had sold the mother of the two men sometime before this when her husband was away from home; and when he came home there was

THOMAS JEFFERYS FREES NEGROES

a terrible scene and they come near separating. They were both wealthy in their own right. The wife was much better off than the husband. The trader got his slaves and twenty mules together and started overland to Louisville.

Everything went well until they got within a few miles of Louisville when the husband of the woman that sold the two negroes overtook the caravan. He went up to the slave-trader and told him that he wanted the two boys. The trader told him that he had paid good prices for them and he would not give them up. This enraged the other and he got off his horse and stopped the two boys and told them to step out of the road in order that the others could pass. The trader came up and got off his horse and told Mr. Jefferys (that was the name of the man that owned the two bright colored negroes) that he would not let him have them under any circumstances. Mr. Jefferys told him to make out a bill of sale at the exact price he paid his wife and he would pay him the money. The trader said that no man could rob him in that way in broad daylight, that he had a bargain of one thousand dollars in the two boys and nothing less than that would get them. Jefferys told him to study five minutes what he would do—accept his proposal or not. The trader said, he would settle it then and made a lunge at Jef-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

ferys, who knocked him down and kicked him until he was more dead than alive. The man that the trader had helping him tried to interfere when one of the boys gave him a thrashing. It looked as if there would be a regular stampede of mules and negroes. Mr. Jefferys told the men leading the mules and the other men whom the trader had bought to stop and stay all together, that the trader would be all right in a short time. They obeyed Mr. Jefferys, as nearly all of them were well acquainted with him. It was a good while before the trader recovered sufficiently to ride his horse. Jefferys told him he could take the money he paid for the two boys or he would get nothing, as his wife had no legal right to sell them; that they were not her property. The trader finally said that he felt that he had been robbed and abused, but he would take the money he had paid. They were not more than two miles from the suburbs of Louisville. Mr. Jefferys told the two boys to walk fast in order to get away from the trader's men and they went to Louisville. The first thing Mr. Jefferys did was to hunt some one who was authorized, and had free papers made out for the boys. He left his horse in a livery barn and took passage on a steamer to Cincinnati with the two boys. When he arrived there he found a business friend of his who was opposed to slav-

#### THOMAS JEFFERY'S FREES NEGROES

ery and related the whole affair including his relationship to the boys, and asked him to send the boys to Richmond, Indiana, where they would find legions of friends, as it was dangerous to have them near the border where hundreds of free negroes were being kidnapped and sold into slavery. He called the two boys to come and in the presence of his friend he gave each of them \$500 in gold and saw them started for Richmond. Mr. Jefferys, through his Cincinnati friend, kept in touch with the boys as long as he lived. They were capable men and did well.

When the slave-trader reached Louisville he made arrangements with a slow sternwheel steam boat to carry his slaves and mules to Memphis. There were a number of anti-slavery guards and guides in the three cities surrounding the falls of the Ohio. While they were loading the mules and slaves on the boat, Mr. Beel, the slave trader, was not well and unable to give any help, owing to his combat with Mr. Jefferys and wanted to hire help about the work. A young man who appeared to be very strong and resolute called to see Mr. Beel and wanted to hire to help him until he got to Evansville, Ind., saying that he would work for small wages. Mr. Beel hired him to help his other man in caring for the negroes and mules saying that he was not well and would be glad to be re-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

lieved of the care for a few days. Before the boat left Louisville the guard got permission to go up town on some business. He went to the telegraph office and sent a cipher dispatch to Mr. Hansen to have two men get on the boat either at Cannelton or Rockport. Mr. Beel was no better the next morning. The boat was a very slow one but was constantly pounding on. The mate said it would be about the middle of the next night before they would get to Cannelton. There were twenty-three negroes in all and there was a bad feeling between the negroes. It seemed that there was a feudal feeling among them. Those from one neighborhood would not have anything to do with those from another neighborhood. One likely middle-aged man seemed to be much the shrewdest of any of them and the guard talked to him about making an attempt to gain his freedom. He said he would do anything to be a free man, but how could he do anything? He did not know where to go. He was informed that there were men who would guide them to freedom; that all he would have to do was to follow the guide, and he would take them to a country where they would be free as long as they lived. This greatly interested the negro. The guard told him that he could talk with about nine or ten other negroes and find if they would want to try to gain their freedom. He was cau-

## THOMAS JEFFERYS FREES NEGROES

tioned to be very careful about the way he talked to them, and it must be a perfect secret. During the day he came to the guard several times and said that he had found eight men who would go with him in making the attempt. The others would not have anything to do with him or the eight who would make the attempt. The guard had him to see that his eight men slept in a forward part of the boat so that they could easily get off when the time came. It was nearly 10 o'clock when the boat arrived at Cannelton. Two other guards got aboard there. It would be after midnight when they reached Rockport. The two new men found that the men they wanted to see were on the lower deck and in charge of the negroes, the owner was in the cabin and the other hired man was asleep. Getting a chance, the guard had the negro who had persuaded the eight men to attempt to gain their freedom to talk with the other two guards and it was arranged that when they should arrive at Rockport, where there was a lot of freight to unload and two hundred barrels of flour to load, the nine negroes would help the deck hands and slip away one at a time. The two guards would be near and they soon would all get together.

When the boat arrived at Rockport the negroes were very busy helping the few deck hands

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

and when the boat backed out into the river preparing to start the nine negroes were with the two guards slipping away. They went west of Rockport, and just before daylight found a large cornfield into which they went and remained there all day. One of the guards went to Ira Caswell's to notify him to have some provisions prepared, that they could get before day the next morning, as they would be there for it. Mr. Caswell had two days before thrashed wheat and there was a large straw stack, the straw had been stacked on a heavy scaffold to make a shelter for his stock during the winter. During the day before the negroes were to be there, Mr. Caswell put a large amount of loose straw into the end of the entry made by stacking the straw on the scaffold and made a most perfect place to hide the negroes. Just about 4 o'clock the next morning the negroes were there with the guards and were all very hungry. As soon as they had eaten they were taken to the straw stack where they had good soft beds of straw. As soon as it was night, they began their march for our big cellar, where they arrived a short time before daylight.

Sometime after leaving Rockport a coal barge was taken in tow and fastened along the side of the boat near the scuttle hole where the coal could be thrown into the hold of the boat near the boil-

#### THOMAS JEFFERY'S FREES NEGROES

ers. The deck hands and the coal company's men were a good while shoveling that coal into the steamboat. They had run seven or eight miles and were in sight of Evansville at the first signs of dawn. The guard awakened the other hired man and went up to Mr. Beel's stateroom where he found him very sick. Beel paid the guard his wages and when the latter came down the hired man was just getting onto the lower deck. The other fourteen negroes were scattered over the deck and it appeared that all were there. When the boat touched the warf, the guard went ashore and was soon mixed with the crowd. The boat had but little freight to unload or load and was soon on her way down the river. It is not known how far they went before the nine negroes were missed. It was learned afterwards that it was believed that the negroes were on the coal barge when it was cast loose from the steamer. It was further learned that the slave dealer was delirious for many days before he got to Memphis, and did not know anything. The man that he had hired was a dummy and not capable of such a charge.

The fugitives were in our cellar all that day and there were two other negroes in it that had been there for several days waiting for more to come when we would send them north. Mr. Hill stayed with us to help take the eleven negroes

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

to White river. Word had been sent to Dr. Posey and he advised us to take the fugitives to White river a little east of Wright's ferry where he would have skiffs for crossing and guides on the north side to take them to the next station. When it became dark we got out two wagons and put five negroes in one and six in the other, with the two guards. Mr. Hill and myself made fifteen people in the party. Everything went well until we got about one-half mile beyond Hawthorn's saw mill when three men stepped out into the road about fifty feet in front of our foremost wagon and ordered us to halt. The two guards and Mr. Hill were off the wagon with their guns in a minute and asked them what they wanted. They said that they had legal authority to examine every wagon that travelled that road and they wanted to know what we were loaded with. "You are highway robbers," said Mr. Hill, "and if you don't leave the road open we will blow you through," and he started toward them. They made a hasty get-away and we did not see or hear any more of them. When we arrived at the river we found Mr. Stucky, and in a little while we had the negroes over the river and in the hands of three strong stalwart men who said they would have them in a safe retreat before morning.

Soon after we got back home one of the fish-

#### THOMAS JEFFERYS FREES NEGROES

ermen from between Rockport and Owensboro came up to the house and knocked at the door. Father told me to put on my clothes and go out and see that the negroes were put into the cellar. There were three negroes. This guard had been at our place many times. He and his partner had crossed the negroes over and he had piloted them all the way, coming by Mr. Caswell's where they were fed and some provisions given them. When the guard got to Mr. Hill's he found that the latter gentleman was at our house, so he came on. The negroes were strong lusty fellows. We decided to keep them there until more came. This guard said that there would be a number of men and women cross the river at their station in two or three days. We did not think it necessary to keep guard over the three men. My father told them that no one had any business in the cellar but him and me; and if any one else came in there to keep hid and if the intruder came onto them to give him a scare. At that time we had working for us a Tennessean who was most bitter pro-slavery in his views. This man was working on a little farm away from the home place and boarded with the family living on that place. We had no idea of his coming to the home farm, but one night while the three men were in the cellar this man came to our house and, as it was late, he de-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

cided to sleep in the barn. During the night he heard someone talking and thought it was in the cellar. He got up and opened the cellar door and went down into it and called out several times: "You thieves get out of here." He finally got up to where the men were standing and one of them gave him a shove that sent him to the floor. Not satisfied with this he got up and went after them again when one of the negroes knocked him down and the three dragged him to the cellar door and put him out. During this scuffle he was pretty badly hurt. He limped up to the house and called my father and told him that there were thieves in the barn cellar and they had used him roughly. Father got a light and found that the man had been roughly used and was skinned up pretty badly about his face. Father had him wash himself and put turpentine on the bruises and had him go to bed. We were a little nonplussed to know how we could keep this fellow from seeing the negroes the next morning. We had a strong pork house standing in our yard. Father went with me and a trusted hand and had the negroes go with us to the pork house, where he locked them in. At that time we had a butting sheep that had been a terror to everybody on the farm. He had become so bad that we had him in a close pen near the big barn. We decided to put that sheep



GEORGE W. HILL.

A Member of the Executive Committee of the Anti-Slavery  
League.



THOMAS JEFFERYS FREES NEGROES

into the cellar and when the wounded fellow got up the next morning have him go to the cellar and see if he could find anything of the robbers that gave him such a thumping. We had a time putting that savage sheep in the cellar, but finally got him in and shut the door on him. Early the next morning the injured man was up and looked like he had been in a battle royal. He told father that he was going to the cellar and see if he could find his hat, which he lost the night before. The two young men working for us and I went with him, opened the cellar door and he went in. As soon as he was in the cellar we heard him yell to let him out, the sheep had butted him down. As soon as we opened the door he came out in a hurry, the sheep butting him every step he made up the ladder! My father was out there by this time and when the butted fellow got so that he could talk, he said, "I will kill that ram." Father told him that was what gave him such a thumping last night. The two hands were ready with a white lie and said that the ram got out of his pen the evening before and they put him in the cellar.

## CHAPTER XVII

---

### JOHN DOLE

One of the anti-slavery guards in the Illinois Division, with his residence at Cairo, Illinois, had a desperate battle with a lot of seasoned toughs at Cairo, Ill. This man's name was John Dole. He was from the state of Maine and had been working in a logging camp for many years until he was hired to come west and work for the Anti-Slavery League. Dole was a man of great physical power.

There was a negro barber who had a shop near the house where Dole roomed, and they became well acquainted. Dole made many inquiries about the slave owners in the southwestern part of Kentucky from the barber, who had been raised in that part of Kentucky. This barber was bought and paid for by an Englishman of means, traveling through that region. This Englishman took George Vest to Cairo, bought a small room and fitted it up in style and furnished it for a barber shop, then made Vest a deed to the lot and also gave him his free papers. One Saturday evening Dole was in the shop being shaved. There was a fellow, who was evidently drinking, in an-

## JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

other chair, who kept up a running conversation of slang with three other cronies of his in the shop. Finally he turned to Dole and asked: "Are you an Englishman?" Dole replied that he was not. The fellow then said that he thought he might be another fool Englishman who would want to buy a slave's freedom, as the negro-loving one did, that bought this barber and set him up in business. Dole said nothing. In a little while one of the toughs said: "I never saw an Englishman, a Scotchman or an Irishman, that was not a mean, dishonest man." This angered Dole who said: "I am an Irishman and as honest as any man." One of them said: "You are a negro-loving liar." As quick as a flash Dole knocked that one down and kicked the other two out of the shop into the street! The fellow in the chair was a coward and begged Dole not to hit him.

The superintendent of the Illinois Division knew that Dole could not do the kind of work he needed and sent him up the river to Evansville with a letter to Hansen in which he explained to Hansen that Dole had trouble with the tough element in Cairo and he knew that if he kept him there he would kill some of them. He said to Hansen: "If you have any need for some one to do some real fighting call on Dole, he has the ability and the will to do a good job." Dole secured a

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

room near the mouth of Pigeon creek, near which there were a number of saw mills. Being a logging man he was often about the mills watching them work. In this way he became acquainted with a Kentuckian named Davis, who owned a large body of timber land near Green river. In the many conversations that Davis had with Dole he learned that he had charge of a logging camp in the state of Maine for several years. Wanting a man that was competent to take charge of a logging camp, he hired Dole to go up Green river near South Carrollton where a logging camp was to be made. Dole saw Mr. Hansen who was willing for him to go, as that would be a good place to have some anti-slavery work done, but he advised Dole to be very careful and keep out of trouble. Davis and Dole selected a suitable place for the camp in a dense woods. A large number of slaves were hired to help about the work. This was in the early part of September, the most leisure time for men who raise tobacco, as there was nothing doing in that line except to watch the firing of tobacco in barns. It was too early to commence the stripping. Hansen got Job Turner and Dole together and had an understanding with them. It was agreed that Turner would try to secure a trusty negro that would work among his race to aid them in se-

## JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

curing their freedom. Turner found it a difficult proposition to get the right kind of a man. Strict rules had been adopted among the slave owners and the patrols were much more rigid in their examination of all strangers and idle negroes without passes.

Mr. Davis had an order for several hundred thousand feet of logs that he would have to get out on a body of land that he owned not far from Spottsville. It was agreed that he would stay at the old camp near South Carrollton and send Dole to get out the special order. They were soon moved and the timber was being piled on the river bank very rapidly. Dole was very busy. He had a number of teams hired, nearly all of them being driven by slaves of men on farms in the country around where he was working. Late in the afternoon of one day a young negro woman came hurridly to the camp and inquired for Pete who was driving one of the teams. She was greatly excited. Dole told her that Pete would be there in a little while. She went into the shanty and seemed not to want anyone of the drivers to see her. It was not long before Pete came. As soon as he had unloaded his wagon Dole told him to tie his horses to a post and go into the shanty where someone wanted to see him. He had been in the cook shanty but a very short time

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

when he came out and told Dole that he would not take the team home; that his master had sold his wife away from him and his two little girls; that he intended to go and see his master and if he did not undo that sale he would kill him and then run for the north. Dole tried to calm the justly mad man and told him that there was a better way of doing than he had planned. Pete asked him how there would be a better way. Dole asked him how old the children were and learned that they were ten and twelve years old. Dole asked when his wife would have to leave him. Pete's wife said that she went into the mistress' room and found her crying, and she said: "Jane, you are sold to a slave-dealer and have only two more days to stay here." Dole told the man and his wife he believed that he could save them from this separation, but was afraid they would tell it to some one. Pete said: "Before God I swear that if you save my family for me, I would die for you." Dole asked Pete if the children could walk ten miles and he replied that they could, fifty if need be. His wife said she could walk any distance. Dole asked Pete if he and his family could meet him at the forks of the Henderson and Evansville road at an hour after night to come to the road west of the shanty so that no patrols would be in the way. When Dole got to the forks

## JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

of the road he found the family there and they made a hurried march to the river bank opposite Evansville. Turner had taught Dole the signal and gave him some turpentine balls, Dole lit one of them and threw it up; this was answered from the middle of the river and soon a skiff was at the water's edge. It conveyed all of them to the city. The negroes were put in hiding for a while and were then taken to the north and to Canada and freedom.

It was almost daylight when Dole got back to his shanty. Pete in his excitement had left his wagon in the yard. Many teams came and went to work, but not Pete. In an hour or so the overseer of Pete's master's farm (the owner was away from home) came to the camp on the hunt of Pete and saw that Pete had left his wagon, but had taken the team home. The overseer went back and soon another negro with the team hitched to the wagon came and went to work. Along about noon the yelp of bloodhounds was heard coming on the trail of the negro family.

The evening before the family attempted to escape it was agreed that after they left the camp, Pete should put a quantity of capsicum on the ground along the trail they were following. This powdered red pepper had been given Pete by Dole who had shown him how to use it. The ne-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

gro family did not come to the shanty but went several hundred feet back of it to the road that they wanted to travel. When the dogs got to where this pepper had been scattered on the ground they stopped and commenced to rub their noses on the ground and snort and sneeze in great fashion and would not take the trail any further. There were at least a dozen men and boys with the dogs. The owner of the dogs procured water and washed the dog's noses, but it did no good. When he tried to persuade the dogs to take the trail they would lie down at the side of the road and howl. The dog-man was furious and cursed the people of the north long and loud. The most of the men in the hunt had teams hauling logs. They gave up the attempt to trail the negroes and went up to the log yard to see Dole, who was busy scaling logs as they came in. The overseer asked him if he was the cause of Pete leaving his wagon. Dole told him that he was not and that he did not know when Pete went home and was surprised this morning to see the wagon in the yard. The dog-man went up to where the two men were talking and said to the overseer: "You need not put any confidence in anything that fellow tells you. He is from the north where they are all lying, thieving abolitionists." This was more than Dole would stand and he made a grab at the fellow's

#### JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

leg, jerked him off his horse and gave him such a thumping that he was badly bruised up.

Dole said to those around him: "Gentlemen, I am here working for one of your citizens and not bothering anyone; but I will not take such intended insults as that coward gave me." The men he was talking to knew that he had done nothing to the dog-man but what he deserved, and they did not blame him. The work went on as usual, Mr. Davis came down to see the work and was much surprised to find that more than half the work was done in three months, which he thought would take at least a year. Dole told him about his trouble with the owner of the dogs. Davis told him that he had done the right thing; that if he had not resented the insult they would have become so domineering that he could not have stayed there; that the object lesson he gave that fellow was satisfactory evidence to all that he would resent an insult.

Job Turner in one of his rounds went to see Dole and told him that the family he started on the road to liberty had gone on the road to Canada and that an old trusted negro man who lived about three miles east of Henderson, Ky., was in the employ of the Anti-Slavery League and that he was worthy of confidence; that he had worked with the two fishermen at Evansville and had de-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

livered many runaway negroes to them who were afterward sent to Canada, also that Uncle Simon was too old to do much work and was permitted to do pretty much as he wished. Turner said that he would have this old negro call on Dole and for him to be on the lookout for him; that his hair was as white as cotton and was in a great white roll around his neck when he wore his hat. The work went on and the contract would be finished in one month more. Dole was not satisfied with the work he had done for the Anti-Slavery League. He had learned from one of the hands that one of the most faithful workers in the camp, with his wife and 16 year old daughter, were to be sold soon to satisfy a mortgage given by their master to a rich tobacco merchant at Henderson. The man was in great trouble for fear he and his family would be separated. Dole was anxious to help this family. One day he saw a very old negro with one of his teamsters unloading logs in the yard. Dole went out to the men and said: "Is this Uncle Simon?" "Yes, I am the man," the old fellow said. "Come into my room and rest," said Dole, "that work is too hard for you." The old man went in and remained for a long time. Dole made an arrangement with him to go to Henderson the next day and find out all about that sale which was to take place there. It was two days

## JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

before the old man returned and informed Dole that the sale did not take place, but the tobacco merchant had bought the family at a private sale and was to send them south in two weeks. Uncle Simon said that he had a little talk with the teamster and he was very uneasy about what would become of them. Uncle Simon said that he would have the teamster call on Dole the next day and then he could make such arrangements as he thought best for the family, and that he would be there again the next day after that when they could talk further about the family. The teamster was true to his promise and called on Dole and told him of his fears of being separated from his family. Dole asked him if he would make an attempt to gain his freedom if he had a chance. He said he would, but he did not know how to go about it, or where to go. Dole told him if he would have his family with him the following night at the cross roads near the little church on the Henderson road, he would find some one there to guide him to the Ohio river and across it and finally to Canada and freedom. The teamster was there the next morning and hauled logs all day. Uncle Simon came, true to his promise. Early in the day Dole told him the arrangement and asked him if he could be away at night without creating suspicion. Uncle Simon said that he was always

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

expected to do up the chores at night and he could not get to the meeting place in time, but he could go to Evansville at once and have the young fishermen send two or three guides and guards who would guide the negro family to Evansville where skiffs would be waiting to take them over the river. This was thought to be the best way. Uncle Simon went on his trip which was a big one for so old a man. When it was dark Dole went to the meeting place to see that everything went off right. When he got to the little church on the Henderson road he found the family hid in some bushes, and in a little while three men came to the church and stopped. Dole knew that they were the guides. The family was put in their charge and they were in a little while on the march for the Ohio river. Dole went back to his shanty. The guides had no trouble and by ten o'clock were at the river, which they crossed, and were put in the care of Willard Carpenter's coachman who finally took them to the cellar under Mr. Carpenter's barn. The next morning when it was found that the family had run away, there was great excitement among the people in that neighborhood. The tobacco merchant who had bought the family had cancelled the mortgage and was at his rope's end. He organized a large company of men to hunt for the runaways. The evening that Dole

#### JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

was at the little church to see them off, he took a half pound of capsicum and put it in the tracks where he found the family in the thicket, so if they should use blood hounds, they could not track them to the Ohio river as the Anti-Slavery League did not want the slave hunter to get any clue as to where they went. The hunt was kept up for quite a while but finally it died down and Mr. Carpenter sent the family to Mr. Street's who already had two in his cellar. We had four in my father's barn cellar; this made nine that we delivered to Dr. Posey's coal bank.

The work on the large contract was nearly completed when Mr. Davis came down and wanted Dole to get out another contract of two hundred and fifty thousand feet of timber. Dole told him that if he would give him a vacation of twenty days he would do it. This was agreed to and Mr. Davis told Dole that he could take the vacation as soon as he wanted to, and that he would shut down the work at South Carrollton for that time and take charge of this work himself. Dole went to Evansville to see Mr. Hanson and get his consent to his further working in the logging camp. He found Hanson and told him that he had done so little for the anti-slavery cause, that he felt ashamed of himself; he wanted to do all he could and that if there was any place con-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

sidered dangerous he would like to have it, as he wanted to do that kind of work. Mr. Hanson advised him to accept the Davis offer and, through Uncle Simon, he could do some more work for the anti-slavery cause.

Job Turner went over the roads near the logging camp once every twenty days. Dole returned to his camp and relieved Mr. Davis. Only a few days were needed to finish the old contract. Then work commenced in earnest on the new contract. Uncle Simon came to the camp one day and informed Dole that Job Turner wanted to see him, "tomorrow night at 8 o'clock at the church on the Henderson road."

Dole met Turner at the appointed place. The two men conferred as to what could be done to aid the poor slaves, whom they knew, to gain their freedom. Turner said that on the route over which he went there were four young men, apparently white, yet they were slaves and owned by their own father! The people in that neighborhood did not hesitate to say that these fine boys were the children of John Day. There were two older children, sisters of these boys and daughters of this man Day. They were fine looking women. When they were grown-up this brutish father took them to New Orleans and sold them for a fancy price to some sporting toughs. The

## JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

boys had told Turner that they felt humiliated and would be glad to go where no one would know their history. Day owned a large farm and many fine teams. The corn crop in the year 1854 was almost a failure and the long drouth cut the tobacco crop very short. Day had no work for his teams so he was glad to hire them out. Turner suggested to Dole that if he could use extra teams he could probably hire them from Day and it was likely that two or three of the boys would be with the teams. Dole said he would write Mr. Davis and tell him about the Day teams being for hire, and that he would be glad to get the teams for two months. Turner's concluding advice was, "if you get the teams, and the boys with them, notify Uncle Simon, who is a cousin to their mother, and you two can fall upon some plan to help the boys gain their freedom."

In a few days four of Day's teams came to Dole's camp to haul logs. Three of the white-skinned boys, a black slave and an overseer composed the party. The overseer came to remain a few days and see that they were properly fixed-up for the two months stay. They built a shed to shelter the teams, and pole shanty for the slaves to sleep in. The overseer boarded with a farmer nearby, during his stay. The new teams were working and logs were coming in very fast.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Each week Day sent provisions for his hands and feed for the horses. The elder of the four brothers who remained at home, occasionally drove the team bringing the supplies. One evening when Uncle Simon was there, he rode part of the way to his home in the Day wagon as it returned. The driver was the elder brother, whose name was Jackson Dean, who took his name from his mother. Jackson told Uncle Simon that it was hard for him to get away from home as he was depended on to do the work about the barn, to milk the cows and have wood in the house for all the fires. Uncle Simon told him there might be a way made that would be easy for him and if there should be, would he go? Jackson said that he would do anything in order to get away to freedom. Day's teams had been hauling logs nearly two months, and would be there only one more week. Uncle Simon had been with the boys in the woods several times and found them anxious to gain their freedom, but did not want to leave the elder brother, if he would go they would all go. Jackson came the next Saturday with the last load of camp supplies; they would go home the next Saturday. Uncle Simon visited the logging camp several times during the last week of their stay. Turner came on Thursday evening and consulted with Dole. They did not want the boys to escape from the camp



JOHN DOLE.

An employee of the Anti-Slavery League.



#### JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

but planned that they should run away from home after they returned there. Turner would see Jackson Dean and arrange for him and the other boys to go on the next Thursday night to a place known as the beaver slide, well known to the boys, where they would find guides to take them over the Ohio river, and on north to freedom. It was about 8 o'clock when the boys reached the appointed place. Here they found three guides and were soon on the road to the trusty fishermen's shack, east of Owensboro. By 2 o'clock they were across the river. As day was showing in the east they came to the big hurricane thicket. Here they remained in hiding until night, resting. One of the guards went on to Mr. Caswell's to have provisions prepared for supper and word was sent to Mr. Hill to be ready to conduct the fugitives to our barn cellar. When daylight came the guides could hardly believe their eyes—they saw four nice looking white men escaping from slavery! As the party of guides and fugitives started for Mr. Caswell's it began a misting rain, making very hard walking. And the night was so very dark that it was difficult to keep the road. When they reached Caswell's supper was ready and was served. Mr. Hill was waiting and as soon as supper was over, their journey was continued, arriving at our barn cellar about daybreak. Mr.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Hill told my father that the boys were as white as the average white man, without a mark that showed negro blood. When breakfast for the fugitives was ready, I went with my father and Mr. Hill to see them. They were nice looking and intelligent young white men. I yet remember what my father said when he saw the boys: "This shows the damning curse of slavery, a man using his own slave woman as concubines and raising children that are of his own blood, and yet are his slaves!"

My father and Mr. Hill thought it would be perfectly safe for the boys to travel during the day time in any direction that they wanted to go. Jackson Dean was spokesman for the boys and said they feared their old master, Day; they knew he was a very determined man and would do anything in his power to capture them; and anyone from the section where they came from would know them. Jackson further said they did not want to be a burden to their rescuers but they would be glad to have the protection of the anti-slavery people for several days yet and by that time they would be so far north that there would be but little danger of being captured. My father held quite an amount of the emergency fund belonging to the Anti-Slavery League. He and Hanson controlled the fund, using it on this route up

## JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

as far as Petersburg, Indiana. Every escaping slave who went over this route was supplied out of this fund, so that when they reached Canada they would not be entirely destitute. During the day that the boys were in our cellar, father gave each of them a pocket-book, a purse and twenty-five dollars. When night came two of the guards, Mr. Hill and I, with the four white boys, took the road for Dr. Posey's coal bank. We reached there without anything occurring worthy of mention. When we told Mr. Stucky that he would find in the morning in the coal bank, four good looking white men he replied: "Have you got all the blacks and are now bringing in the white people?"

It was several days before Dole heard anything about the running away of the boys. One day one of his log haulers told him that his wife, who lived in the neighborhood of Mr. Day, learned that when Day found that the boys had run away he said if they could get along without him he could get along without them.

One evening Dole was in the timber looking for some trees that he wanted the sawyers to cut. After he had started for the logging camp one of the sawyers followed him, pretending that he wanted a file of a special pattern for his saw. This man advised Dole to be careful how he went into the timber, the blood-hound man who he had given

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

such a thumping, had been seen several times during the past week wandering around through the timber. He was accompanied by another man—a stranger—and both men carried guns.

Late that evening Turner came by the camp on the way to the city of Evansville. Dole told him what he had heard. Turner advised him to not leave the camp and to keep a good lookout for danger; that when he reached the city that he would have two men sent to him. These he could use in helping discover and capture the vicious fellows. The sawyer who got the file, came the next morning and told Dole that on the day before just after they had left the timber, the two men with guns hurried up to where his mate was resting and waiting for his return. They asked the sawyer if Dole had been there, saying they wanted to see him. "My mate told them," said the sawyer, "that you had gone with me to see some trees that you wanted cut; the two men went in that direction, pointing in the opposite direction from which we went."

Dole told the sawyer that there would probably be two strange men in the woods by the afternoon of that day and for him and his mate to pay no attention to them. Dole asked the sawyer to go and bring back to camp his mate, which was done. Dole told the men that he wanted them to

## JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

do but little work for a day or two, and keep him posted on the movements of the two men who evidently were hunting him, giving each of them five dollars. At noon two men came to the camp with a letter for Dole. These were the sleuths, sent by Turner. The letter was from Mr. Hanson, who advised him to not unnecessarily expose himself to danger. The two men sent to him were good ones and suggested that after they had run the dog-man away, he could use them to guide any travelers to a safe harbor. He said the two detectives could remain with Dole for a while.

The men were on the watch for three days without seeing anyone and had almost concluded the two suspicious characters had left that locality. The detectives and the two sawyers hid in a small thicket where, unseen from without, they had a good view of all around them for quite a distance. One of the sawyers watching saw the two men with guns at "trail arms", slipping up toward the logging camp. One of the sawyers hurried to the camp to put Dole on guard. The other three followed the two suspicious men. They had gone about two hundred yards, when one of the guards saw the two men peering over a large log in the direction of the camp. The three men slipped up behind the men, making the least possible noise. The dog-man and his partner were

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

so intent on watching the camp (which was not more than one hundred yards away) that the guards approached within fifty feet of them and ordered them to hold up their hands. They made some show of resistance but were told to surrender or be killed. The two guards kept them covered with their rifles, while the third man took away their arms and then tied their hands behind them.

"Who are you" they indignantly demanded, "and what right have you to capture us?"

The guards told them that they were strangers in that part of the country, on a hunting excursion; that they saw the prisoners slipping up on the men in the camp, as if they aimed to commit murder, and so interfered. The prisoners were asked what they meant by slipping up to the camp? They were told if they could give a reasonable explanation of their actions, they would be released. The blood hound owner said that a man in that camp had abused him without cause and he wanted revenge. He said he did not want to kill the man but intended to cripple him by breaking an arm or leg. The guards told him if he had stated facts, that settlement of the affair was between him and the man he intended to cripple; that they would bring them together and they could adjust their grievances. The prisoners

## JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

strongly objected to being turned over to Dole, as he would kill both of them. The guards insisted that they would not be doing right to turn them loose, when they had confessed that they were there to shoot Dole. The prisoners begged to be released, promising to never come back to that section again. One of the guards went to get some paper on which to write a parole. On reaching the camp he related the situation to Dole who was perfectly satisfied. The guard returned with the paper and wrote the parole as follows:

"This is to certify that we, the undersigned, do agree and hereby obligate ourselves to keep this parole under the penalty of being returned to the grand jury of Henderson County, Ky., for attempting to kill John Dole, the Superintendent of the Davis logging camp, at Spottsville, Ky. We agree that we will not go within five miles of said camp during the next twelve months, or have any one representing us, go within five miles of that camp.  
Done at Spottsville, Ky., October 13th, 1854.

Signed                      James Thorp and  
                                  Henry Scales.

One day while Dole was scaling the logs of one of the haulers, he saw that he had a bad bruise on the side of his face and asked what caused it. The man answered that his master had come home last night under the influence of liquor and com-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

ing to his shanty while he, with his wife and four children were eating supper, and abused all of them, using the most filthy language at his command. Finally he told them he would sell the wife and two oldest children to a slave buyer who would be in that section within ten days. The teamster said he pleaded with his master to not break up his home, when he picked up a chair and struck the slave on the side of his head and face.

Dole was furiously angry and asked the negro why he did not take his family and run away? The man replied that he did not know where to go. Dole asked if he would take his family and go if he was sure that he would gain his freedom. "Yes, indeed" was the earnest reply, "I would walk on my knees to help those who helped me save my family."

Dole told him to have his family at a designated place, well-known to both of them, on the next Saturday night at 8 o'clock and that he would be put in charge of guides who would take them across the Ohio river and to Canada and freedom. Dole told him that he could miss the patrols by going across farms nearly all the journey. The two guides left with Dole were at the place agreed upon with a good supply of capsicum which was sprinkled around where the negroes had walked. They were soon on their way

#### JOHN DOLE'S ANTI-SLAVERY WORK

to the Ohio river which they crossed in the fisherman's skiffs and were in a short time hurried on north and to Canada.

Dole soon finished his contract with Davis and was sent by Hanson to New Albany. He had good grit and did whatever he attempted to do, well. I have no data of his work after he left Evansville, but I feel certain that he made good wherever he was sent.

## CHAPTER XVIII

---

### BEECHER'S VIEW OF THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

(From Readings in Indiana History, Page 382)

August 4, 1854. About nine years ago there came to Indianapolis, Indiana, a colored man named John Freeman. He brought with him some few hundred dollars, a part of which he invested in real estate. He was a painter, white washer and a man of all work. He married a young woman who was a servant in our family. His deportment won for him general respect and confidence. He rapidly increased his property and is now worth about six thousand dollars, which for this community is a very handsome property. No man's word was better than Freeman's. He was honest, punctual and reliable. He became an active member of the colored Baptist church and conscientiously discharged his duties as a church member. He has a family of three children.

On the 23rd of June a man named Pleasant Ellington, formerly from Kentucky, now of Missouri, who is, as we understand a Methodist preacher (an imposter), appeared in Indianapolis and found miscreants base enough to assist him

in arresting Freeman, upon the claim that he was a slave. Freeman claims that he is a freeman and shows many papers recognizing that fact. The Judge has granted nine weeks for Freeman to procure further evidence of his freedom. There are some facts that have come to our knowledge which it will be edifying to know. When Freeman's arrest was known the whole community was moved. One hundred men of all parties, and of first standing in the place, such as Judge Blackford, Judge Wick, N. B. Palmer, Calvin Fletcher, Esq'r. and many others such, signed a bond for bail in the sum of \$1600. The amount in gold was brought in court to be deposited for the preacher Ellington, in case Freeman proved to be a slave, did not appear, or for his freedom in any event. Rev. Mr. Ellington refused to agree to any price should he get possession of him, but determined to take him to Missouri.

Under a pretense that he feared a rescue, the marshal was about to remove Freeman to Madison jail, on the Ohio river, but has consented to leave him in the jail in Indianapolis, on condition that Freeman pay three dollars per day for a guard to watch over himself.

We have some good but dull men in New York who have denied that Christian men and families were subject to separation and sale, under the

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

system of slavery. It is said to represent such scenes as Uncle Tom's separation from his family and his wife is a slander. Yet here is a preacher of the gospel making a pilgrimage of half a thousand miles to find and arrest a member of a Christian church, in a free state, and drag him into slavery; he finds him settled down in a home which his own industry has secured, with a wife and three children, a useful and greatly respected citizen. One would think that a man with a particle of humanity, even if Freeman were his slave, upon seeing such a state of facts would refuse to break up and desolate a family and blight the prospects of a man and fellow Christian. But so deeply has this fellow drunk of the spirit of patriotism that he determines to make mischief. Bonds and securities were offered him the most ample, in case Freeman should prove his slave. He refused everything. He demanded the "man," and declared that he would remove him to a slave state and to slavery.

A man that can read such a state of facts and not feel his heart rising with indignation against this scoundrel clergyman, ought to regard himself as having sinned away his day of grace, and as sealed over to reprobation.

And yet, is this man any worse than the laws? Has he done anything illegal? This Amer-

BEECHER ON FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

ican people have laws within which men may violate every sentiment of humanity, smother every breath of Christianity, outrage the feeling of a whole community, crush an innocent and helpless family, reduce a citizen of universal respect and proved integrity, to the level of a brute, carry him to the shambles, sell him forever away from his church, his children, his wife. All this may be done without violating the laws of the land—nay, by the laws and under the direction of a magistrate.

And so deadening has been the influence of slavery upon the public mind that religious teachers and religious editors will not find a word to say against this utter abomination, and many pious words will they utter in favor of this execrable traffic.

Meanwhile, that same God who permits the existence of tarantulas, scorpions, and other such creatures as this Rev. Mr. Ellington. It may serve a good purpose, in this easy, timid, shuffling age, to exhibit beneath the sun, how utter a villain a man may be and yet keep within the pale of the law, within the permission of the church, and within the requirements of the Christian ministry. To crush the human heart, to eat a living household, to take a family into one's hands and crush it like a cluster of grapes, this is respectable, legal, and

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Christian, in the estimation of cotton patriots, and patriotic Christians, who regard law as greater than justice, the Union is more important than public virtue and practical Christianity. Such laws as that which will permit these scenes will destroy the conscience and humanity of the community; or else be itself destroyed by them. A people who have learned to see such sights unmoved are not far from the level of the Romans, whose amusements were in blood and the death of beasts and gladiators.

As long as smooth prophets ease down the public conscience; and obsequious editors count themselves worthy to bind up the scandals of savage laws, whose every step perpetrates as many crimes as man can commit against man—so long we need not wonder that there are such monsters as this Ellington ruffled out as a minister of the gospel, to the shame of every honest man that wears the same cloth; and preaches the same gospel like a volcano through whose base flames the fire of perdition.

It will not forever be thus. There is an unperverted heart. There is a Judge above corruption. There are laws neither framed in deceit nor red-mouthed with blood of the innocent. We turn to that Great Heart, guardian of the supreme and universal law, (beneath which the miserable, pid-

BEECHER ON FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

dling enactments of paltry politicians and mousing merchants are as grass, withered leaves beneath the cedars of Lebanon), has not the shame of our nakedness appeared long enough? How long shall this land stand before the world like a drunken woman loosely exhibiting her hideous charms, which none can behold without shame and disgust.

## CHAPTER XIX

---

### JOHN AND PETE MUNDAY

In the dark days of slavery there lived in Webster County, Kentucky, a man named William Munday, who owned several slaves, among these were two boys, John and Pete, who longed to be free. They talked much about freedom when they were alone, and listened eagerly to every tale of run-aways escaping from their masters and making their way to Canada. They made inquiries about the particulars whenever they thought it prudent to do so. They had settled the question in their own minds, and with each other, that as soon as a good opportunity offered itself they would run away. There was a noted Cumberland preacher who lived just across the line in Henderson county, who owned slaves. This preacher often came to Gibson county, Indiana to preach; and he usually brought along his slave servant. The slaves of Munday and those belonging to the preacher were related; and as both masters were lenient with their slaves, they often visited each other. During these visits the slave of the preacher told John and Pete of his wonderful trips to Indiana; of the great Ohio river; the city of Evans-



COL. JAMES W. COCKRUM.

A Member of the Executive Committee of the Anti-Slavery  
League.



## JOHN AND PETE MUNDAY

ville and of the many other wonderful things he had seen in his travels. They learned from him the direction to the land of freedom and of the roads that led there. All this information greatly excited the Munday boys and they determined to make an attempt to gain their freedom, and at once began making preparations for their journey. But it was quite awhile before an opportunity came. However, one did come and it happened in this way:

It was a very bad crop year and Munday had failed in his crops. To help over the winter he hired John and Pete to a tobacco packing house in Henderson. They went to work in the latter part of August, 1854. For the boys this was the first step toward liberty. They entered the factory as carrier boys, helping carry the tobacco to the men who packed it in hogsheads. Their lives here were as pleasant, as they always had been with their master. While working here they became acquainted with an old gray-headed negro, who was known far and near in that part of Kentucky by the name of Simon. This old negro soon gained the confidence of John and Pete and they told him of their great desire to be free. Now Uncle Simon was an agent of the Underground Railroad. He told them if they would trust him, that he would put them on the road that led to freedom. Uncle

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Simon was a slave himself, but as he was so old, he said, freedom would do him but little good, but if he was younger he would go to Canada, himself. Uncle Simon had become acquainted with some Underground Railroad people in Evansville and had made arrangements to send them as many slaves as he could, and these people agreed to help all who reached there, to escape.

John and Pete were willing to make the attempt to escape. After they had worked about two weeks in the factory Uncle Simon told them to meet him at a certain place on the river bank, about one o'clock at night, and all would be ready for the start. The boys kept the appointment and found Uncle Simon awaiting them. Getting into a skiff Uncle Simon rowed to the Indiana side. Here, by previous arrangement, a man met them and took the two boys in a skiff to Evansville, where they were put in a cellar. They were kept here for nearly a week, until the search for them was over. Their guardian visited them every night and left food to last them twenty-four hours. One night he told them it was time to be going, and guided them through the city and put them on the tow path of the Wabash and Erie canal and instructed them to follow the path to the end, which was in the state of Ohio. He assured them that friends along the way would be on the look-

JOHN AND PETE MUNDAY

out for them, who would give them further instructions. A haversack of provisions and five dollars in silver was given to each of the boys. They were instructed to travel only at night and never pass anyone. If they should see or hear anyone they must step aside and keep in hiding until the person or persons were gone. If it became necessary to enter a town to purchase provisions, they must go around it and approach it from the north. Bidding their friends good-bye they started on their 459 mile jaunt to freedom. That night they reached the vicinity of Millersburg, Warrick Co., where they hid in the woods, remaining all next day. When darkness came they were again on their journey. Next morning they hid themselves near Port Gibson, Gibson County. They knew not how far they had traveled, or what direction they were going, but knew that by sticking to the tow path they could not go wrong. But their supply of provisions was running low, but they got something eatable from a cornfield but had to eat it raw, as they feared to make a fire. They decided that the next night they would stop at some town and purchase needed supplies. When they reached Port Gibson, the lights in the stores and houses were burning bright, so they decided to not stop there and pressed on. They passed Francisco about the middle of the night and went a short

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

distance beyond and went into hiding in the woods. Next day about ten o'clock they walked back to town and entered a store. Here they inquired the prices of a brier scythe, a grubbing hoe and a pair of hames. They told the merchant that they had taken a job of clearing a piece of land a few miles north of that place and were to board themselves. They bought a side of bacon, a bag of corn meal, a tin bucket, a frying pan and two tin cups, and started north on the tow path. Going a little ways they hid in the woods until night and then resumed their tramp northward. About three miles west of Dongola they came to a great bottom covered with a heavy growth of timber. Here they kindled a fire and cooked their supper of fried bacon and corn cakes. They traveled in this manner for many days and nights. The further they advanced northward the bolder they became, until they began to travel during the day, but always avoiding persons or towns. After about three weeks, they one day came upon a negro man fishing in the canal. They stopped and talked with him. At last he asked if they were not from Evansville, Indiana. They answered that they were and that they were run-a-ways. He said that he suspected as much and that he had "been fishing for them for several days." This negro man, like Uncle Simon, was an agent of the Un-

JOHN AND PETE MUNDAY

derground Railroad. He had his freedom papers and so did not fear arrest. Run-a-way slaves would not be afraid to talk to him as they would a white man, so he was used by the anti-slavery people to head off the escaping slaves and befriend them. He told the boys that men from Evansville were waiting for them in town just ahead of them and that they must follow the tow path no longer. The fisherman rolled up his lines and followed by the boys, started off through the country. For many days they followed their guide, at last reaching Toledo, Ohio, where friends were on the lookout for them. As the slave hunters from Evansville had confederates at this city watching for run-aways, they were hid in a secure place for several days. When it was safe to move them they were put in the hold of a large steamer and in a day or two were landed in Canada, where they were free.

The war soon came on and after the great struggle ended, they returned to the United States eager to get back to their old home, hoping to meet once more their old mother. They learned that she and another son had moved to Indiana. They continued their search and found her alive and well. It was a re-united family never again to be separated by slavery, or to be hounded and tormented by slave drivers or slave hunters, for slavery no longer cursed our fair land. (229)

## CHAPTER XX.

---

### REV. HIRAM HUNTER RELEASING KIDNAPPED NEGROES

In the fall and winter of 1863 I had the misfortune to be an inmate of Libby prison hospital with a wound made by a Minney ball, through my hip. There were at that time about one thousand Federal officers, from the rank of brigadier general down to second lieutenant, in that prison. Among the number as a patient in the hospital was Col. W. McMackin of the 21st Illinois, the regiment with which General Grant entered the service. The Colonel, as well as myself, had been captured at the battle of Chicamaugua, Georgia. As I now recall it he was a Cumberland minister and a Christian gentleman at all times doing all he could to console the poor unfortunates in that hospital, many of them very severely wounded and a number died while he was there. I am glad to be privileged to bear testimony that the Colonel was ever ready at any time, night or day, to aid those wounded and sick in their temporal wants and to give them the words of consolation which are in the precious promises of our Saviour. He appeared to have never been strong and the ex-

REV. HIRAM HUNTER

posure from that terrible campaign from Murfreesborough, Tenn., to Chickamaukua, Ga., in the rain nearly every day had been so severe that he was apparently suffering from that dreadful disease, consumption. During the long and weary months that he worked so faithfully for the hapless and helpless ones in that house of death he never complained of his own suffering. He was ever doing good and organized a Bible class for the convalescents. In this way I became very well acquainted with him. He learned where I lived and that the town of Princeton was near my home. In talking together he related to me this strange story which took place some twenty-five years before.

He said that he had gone to Princeton, Indiana, to meet Hiram Hunter and had been there for some time doing school work in the old brick Seminary which stood on the hill, under Hunter, or some other persons whom Hunter had assigned to give his lessons in theology. During the time he was there he went out with the ministers of the different churches in the country surrounding Princeton and heard the old ministers preach. At one time he attended a camp meeting several miles southwest of Princeton. There were many preachers and thousands of persons in attendance. While attending one of these meetings there was a

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

lengthy service at night and while the meeting was in progress there was some rain and a flurry of wind. After the meeting, Rev. Hiram Hunter, who was in attendance, was invited by a gentleman who lived near to go home with him to spend the night. The Colonel, through Hunter, was also invited. They were all on horseback and Mr. Knowlton had his wife on the same horse with him. They had gone some distance from the church when they found the road completely blocked by the top of a tree which had fallen into it. They all dismounted and crept around through the thick brush as best they could to get around the tree top. On coming to the road on the other side, they found a covered wagon which was stopped by the blockade. On coming up to it a man was seen standing in the road. Mr. Hunter was in front and asked the man how he came there with a covered wagon at that time of night. The man answered him by saying it was none of his business. Mr. Hunter was a determined man and it did not take much of this sort of thing to raise his anger. He said: "I spoke to you as a gentleman and your answer shows that you are an ill-bred cur. I am now satisfied that there is something wrong about you and before we go any farther we will investigate." At this point another man appeared, and going around the tree came up and

REV. HIRAM HUNTER

demanded to know what the trouble was. Mr. Hunter told him there was no trouble but they thought there was something wrong and intended to know what it was. At this, the man with the ax, said that the first man who attempted to lay hands on the wagon would lose his life. As quick as thought one of the two stalwart sons of Mr. Knowlton, who were with the camp-meeting party, caught the ax and wrenched it out of the hands of the threatening fellow. The other man attempted to aid his partner when the senior Mr. Knowlton laid him on his back in the road. The two boys tied the man they had and their father and Mr. Hunter drew the arms of the man who was knocked down behind his back and MacMackin tied them hard and fast with his handkerchief. The night was cloudy but there was a moon and it was not very dark but the timber was so very thick on each side of the narrow road that they could not see to any advantage. Matches, at that time, were not in general use. Mr. Knowlton told one of his sons to take his mother home and bring back some material to make a torch. The young man was soon back with the steel, flint and punk and in a little time they had a flaming torch. In the wagon they found a negro man and woman with their hands tied and they tied to a cross-piece under the bottom of the wagon and a rope

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

was tied in each of their mouths. They were soon liberated, but it was some time before they could stand or talk. They said they lived in Illinois, a few miles west of Vincennes, Indiana, and they had been tied ever since the latter part of the night before and had been gagged most of the time. They further said that they crossed the Wabash at Mt. Carmel on the ferry; that they were free negroes, and that these two men had come to their cabin the night before after they had gone to bed, pretending to be lost and asked the privilege of feeding their teams near their house, saying they would sleep in their wagon, and if the negro woman would get them a good supper they would give her a silver dollar, and she did so.

Sometime after midnight they knocked at the door, saying that they were cold in the wagon and asked permission to lie on the floor. The door was opened and they caught and tied and put them into the wagon. This occurred almost twenty-four hours before they were liberated.

The wagon was turned and the two kidnappers were made to walk behind it, guarded by Messrs. Hunter and Knowlton. One of the boys drove the team and they were soon home. After getting into the house they held an informal examination. The two negroes told the same story that they did at the wagon. The man knocked down was

REV. HIRAM HUNTER

the first interrogated. He was very insolent and said that he would make it dear business to those stopping him and meddling with his property; the two negroes were his and he had a description of them which he showed. He said that they had run away from southern Kentucky about two years before. The other kidnapper would not say anything. The stories of the negroes were believed, and it was decided to hold the men until morning and take all of them to Princeton, Indiana where legal proceedings would be brought.

The first cabin of the family was standing in the yard. A pallet was made down on the floor and the kidnappers were put on it. There were no windows and but one door, which was fastened on the outside with a rope. The two boys volunteered to occupy a room not more than ten feet away and guard the door. In some manner the outlaws untied each other and got out at a low wide chimney and made a break for the stable to get the horses, but the boys with their guns foiled them in this and they made a rush for the woods which was near by and escaped.

That was the last these people ever heard of them. The next morning it was decided that Mr. Knowlton and a neighbor would take the negroes back to their home. The two men were well

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

mounted and armed with long rifles, as everybody was in those days.

When they arrived in the neighborhood in which the negroes lived they found the wagon and team had been stolen about three miles north of their cabin, and that the negroes had lived in that neighborhood more than twenty years.

## CHAPTER XXI

---

### THE KIDNAPPING OF REUBE AT PRINCETON, INDIANA.

In 1817 William Barrett moved to this state from Tennessee and settled in what is now southwestern Columbia township, Gibson county, Indiana. He had formerly lived in the state of South Carolina and moved from there to Tennessee in 1804.

Some years after they reached Indiana a negro man named Reube who had formerly been a slave of Mr. Jacob Sanders (but had been freed for having saved his master's life) came on from South Carolina with a relinquishment paper for Mrs. Barrett to sign for her part of her father's estate. Reube remained for nearly a year; the winter weather was too cold for him and he determined to go back before another winter set in. John W. Barrett, a son of William, at that time a large, gawky boy about eighteen years old and six feet eight inches tall, went with Reube on many fishing and hunting adventures. When the time came for Reube to start back John took him over to Princeton and led back home, the horse which he had ridden. Reube intended to go from there

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

to Evansville with the first passing team that went that way.

The act which gave Reube his freedom was a heroic one. There was a maniac in that section of South Carolina who at times became very desperate and was kept in confinement in a place the authorities had for that purpose. He was very sly and cunning, and stepping up back of Mr. Sanders pinioned his hands behind him and threw him on the ground, and with a large knife attempted to cut his throat. Reube, being in the garden nearby, saw his master's peril and running up behind the maniac struck him about the ear with the hoe and felled him to the ground. Mr. Sanders said: "Reube, from this day on you are a free man and I will at once make out your free papers." He told him to stay on the place if he wanted to for as long a time as suited him and he would pay him for all the work he did. The papers were made out, and in giving him his freedom a full history of the reason was given and they were recorded. To make it certain that no one would disturb Reube, Mr. Sanders had a record of a full history of the case engraved on a gold plate, also had a gold chain attached to the gold plate that went around his neck so that it was easy at any time if the patrols stopped him to show the certificate on the plate. Mr. Barrett's family heard

## KIDNAPPING OF REUBE

nothing of Reube for two or three years. Finally Mr. Sanders wrote to his niece, Mrs. Barrett, asking her why Reube did not come back.

In 1832 Col. J. W. Cockrum bought the steam-boat "Nile" and intended to run her up the Yazoo river and other small rivers to bring the cotton out and carry it to New Orleans. John W. Barrett, a brother-in-law, was made clerk of the boat and had charge of the freight. At one landing on the Yazoo river there was a large quantity of cotton to be loaded, and the planters were still delivering from their farms. Young Barrett was on the deck tallying as the mate and deck hands were putting the cargo aboard when a colored man came near him and said: "Mr. Barrett don't you know me? I am Reube who hunted with you in Indiana. Don't let on you know me." Barrett did know him and was greatly surprised at thus meeting him. Finally he got a chance and told Reube to roll a bale of cotton behind the cabin stairs. Reube told him that his master was on the bank and it was not safe for them to be seen talking together. The planter whom Reube called his master had a large amount of cotton and was watching the count of the bales and his slaves were helping to load it in order that they might finish before night. During the loading Barrett had several chances to say a word to Reube. There was a wood yard

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

a few miles below, where the boat would stop to take on wood. Reube said he would be down there when the boat came, which would be after night. When the boat rounded to Reube was ready to load wood as soon as it was measured. Barrett watched his chances and took Reube down in the hold and secreted him there and looked after him. They got to New Orleans, unloaded the cotton and took on a lot of government freight for one of the military outposts on the upper Arkansas river. Reube was still in hiding, no one but the clerk being aware of his presence on board.

While they were unloading the government freight Barrett went to the commander of the fort and told the history of Reube and all about his being kidnapped and being sold into slavery to a Mississippi planter on the Yazoo river. As fortune would have it the commander was a New England man and felt indignant at the outrageous treatment the poor negro had received and assured Barrett that he would keep him in his employ at good wages until he had an opportunity to send him back to South Carolina, which he did. About a year afterward the Barrett family received a letter from Mr. Sanders telling of Reube's arrival home.

Mr. John W. Barrett told me in 1854, the last time he was in Indiana, that after he left Reube

#### KIDNAPPING OF REUBE

at Princeton he had no opportunity to get away to Evansville until about the middle of the next day. He was making inquiry of some people if they knew of any team which was going to Evansville. Reube was very fond of showing his gold certificate of freedom; finally two men told him they were going to Evansville that evening but they could not get away before the middle of the afternoon and made an agreement that he could go with them if he would cook for them on the road and after they got there. Reube readily agreed to this, since they told him that they had some thought of going on to Tennessee.

They finally started and after staying a day or so at Evansville (which then was only a small place) they started on the Tennessee trip. They made it convenient to go through west Tennessee and on to Memphis. They told Reube, to whom they had been very kind, that in a day or so they would go to North Carolina and in doing so would pass near his home if he wanted to go with them, but the next place they went to was the Yazoo river. There they took Reube's gold plate and papers from him and sold him to the planter with whom Barrett found him.

## CHAPTER XXII

---

### A BLUFF THAT FAILED TO WORK

About the year 1851 an old negro man named Stephenson, came to see the author's father, who was largely interested in farming, to have him keep his boys, one fourteen, one twelve and the other ten years old, for him until he could make arrangements to start for Liberia. This my father agreed to do. It was spring time and the boys helped with the work, and thus continued all through that season. The old man had no chance to get away and work was well under way for the second season. Old man Stephenson had come to this country from South Carolina with Dr. Samuel McCullough, about the middle of the forties. He was a free man but married a slave and bought her freedom. They had lived in the same neighborhood for several years until his wife died. One evening, just as the work was over for the day, and the colored boys were doing up the work around the barn, two men rode up to the front of the house and called to the author's father, who was sitting on the porch, saying they wanted to see him. They told him they had a description of three colored boys who were born in

#### A BLUFF THAT FAILED

South Carolina who were slaves and called to see him about it as they had learned he had three colored boys working for him.

These two fellows no doubt had a confederate in the neighborhood who had given them a perfect description of the boys. They talked together, my father not having the least idea who they were and evidently they did not know him or they would have been the last fellows to come there on such a mission. He excused himself to go into the house for something. They waited for him to return, which he did with his bear gun, "Old Vicksburg," in his hands.

They commenced to plead with him not to have any trouble. He told them that there was not the slightest danger of any trouble but he wanted them to see what sort of a machine he guarded the boys with and said to them: "Do you see that little house?" pointing to a room in our yard "The three boys sleep there and if they are disturbed I will kill fifteen such worthless vagabonds as you are before you get them, fugitive law or any other law. And I want to say before I get mad that you had better go for you may get into danger." He cocked the big gun and said: "I feel it coming on—go, and go quick."

They took him at his word and they went in a hurry. He waited until they had gone about

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

seventy-five yards away when he turned loose at them, intending to shoot just above their heads. At the crack of that monster gun they laid down on their horses' necks and made as good time as did the best mounted F. F. V. when Sheridan's cavalry was after them.

The boys remained with us for nearly three years before they got away to Liberia and that was the last we ever heard of the men hunting for them.

The next year my father made the race for the legislature. One of these fellows who was a hotel keeper at Petersburg, Indiana, went into Gibson County to work against him. He told the people that father was a blood-thirsty man and that he did not regard the life of a man more than he would the life of a bear. It was evident he had struck the wrong crowd. They demanded that he tell them of one instance where he had shown such a disposition. He told them that two friends of his had gone to father's house to see about some runaway negroes and that he threatened their lives and as they went away shot at them. This disgruntled fellow was laughed out of the township for his meddling.

## CHAPTER XXIII

---

### JOSEPH MONTGOMERY LIBERATING TWO KIDNAPPED NEGROES.

Judge Isaac Montgomery owned a farm near Princeton at the time he lived on his farm in eastern Gibson county, and he cultivated both farms.

At one time Harvey and Joseph, and a hand working for them named McDeeman had two loads of produce, venison, hams, hides and bear bacon which they were taking to Robert Stockwell at Princeton. Joseph at that time lived on what was afterward the Richey farm about one half mile west of his father. He was a very large man and was known far and near as one of the strongest men who ever lived in that section.

As they were getting within about two miles of Princeton and after climbing a hill they stopped to let their ox teams rest and heard a loud noise as of men in a wrangle. Joseph Montgomery and McDeeman left Harvey with the teams and taking their guns went to find out what the noise was about. When they got to the parties making the noise they found two negroes handcuffed together and a white man was beating one of the negroes with a heavy stick.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Montgomery, who was as fearless as strong, with McDeeman rushed up to the place where the trouble was and asked the man with the club what in "hades" he meant by beating the man with such a bludgeon. There were two white men and one of them became very insulting, telling Montgomery they were beating their own property and it was none of his business. One of the negroes cried out "Oh, that is Mr. Montgomery! Don't you know me? I am Pete who kept your camp at the bear's den."

Montgomery did know him. The bully had the club drawn back to hit Pete when Montgomery leaped like a panther and hit the fellow at the butt of the ear and completely knocked him out. At this the other kidnapper started to draw a large knife when McDeeman who was a full-fledged Irishman, raised his gun and said: "On your worthless life don't move your hand. If you so much as bat your eye I will shoot it out of your head." They took the key away from them, freed the negroes, put the handcuffs on the kidnappers, gave the two negroes the clubs and marched the two men up to the wagons and on into Princeton. Montgomery tried to have the kidnappers put in jail until court convened. The old justice before whom they brought the proceedings was thoroughly in sympathy with slavery and he virtually there

JOSEPH MONTGOMERY RELEASES NEGROES.

made the same decision that Chief Justice Tanny did thirty years afterwards. It was as follows:

"There is no evidence that the two men kidnapped the negroes except the statement made by the negroes. The evidence of a negro has no force in court which could affect a white man."

They were set at liberty. They were so much elated over being freed from the charge that they proceeded to fill up with whiskey and hunted up Montgomery and started a quarrel with him but he gave both of them at the same time such a thrashing that they were glad to get away.

## CHAPTER XXIV

---

### KIDNAPPING ONE OF MAJOR ROBB'S HANDS AT HIS MILLS NEAR HAZLETON, INDIANA.

In 1822 a negro named Steve Hardin, who had worked with Major Robb about his mill for some time, was kidnapped by a Kentuckian named J. Teal who was visiting south of Vincennes, and carried to New Orleans and sold into slavery. Two years afterward a man named Pea who lived west of Petersburg, Indiana, went down the river and at new Orleans met Steve Hardin with whom he was well acquainted. Pea went with the negro to a lawyers office and told him the negro's history and that he was born in Indiana Territory after 1787. Suit was brought and the negro was given his liberty, the judge holding that those who were born in the Northwest Territory after the ordinance of 1787 were free.

In 1897 John Warrick, Sr. brought from Kentucky to Indiana Territory a negress. When the state constitution was adopted Warrick sold this woman to a Kentucky friend who kidnapped her near Owensville, Indiana, and took her to his Kentucky home. Parties from the section where

#### KIDNAPPING OF MAJOR ROBB'S HAND

she was kidnapped instituted proceedings in a Kentucky court for her freedom. The court held that it could not recognize the theory which held one to be a slave and free at the same time and further held that the negress was free by being taken into Indiana Territory for a residence after the ordinance of 1787.

## CHAPTER XXV

---

### AN ATTEMPT TO KIDNAP A BARBER AT PETERSBURG, INDIANA.

Dr. J. R. Adams of Petersburg tells this story of a barber who came to Petersburg and opened a barber shop. One of the human vultures who were ever ready to kidnap the poor negroes sent off and had a correct description of the barber made and sent back to him. He and another confederate at Washington, Indiana, who brought a stranger with him who claimed to own the barber and who said he was his negro. He had posters which gave a perfect description of the barber, and in which a reward of two hundred dollars was offered for his re-capture, claiming that he had run away from Tennessee some three years before.

These villians were preparing to start for the south with the unfortunate barber when Dr. Adams brought proceedings to liberate him. The doctor through an attorney delayed proceedings until he could send a runner to Vincennes and get Robert LaPlant who swore that the negro was born in a small house in his father's yard in Vincennes, that the mother and father were in the employ of his parents at that time and continued

#### KIDNAPPING A BARBER

to work for his father until the barber was nearly grown. Dr. Adams swore he had known him as a free negro for ten years. On this strong evidence the young barber was liberated, on account of the prejudice of the time, all the white villains who tried to do this great wrong were allowed to go free.

## CHAPTER XXVI

---

### TWO FREE NEGROES KIDNAPPED WEST OF PRINCETON, INDIANA.

In 1822 two negro men came to what is now Princeton hunting for work. They were hired by General Wm. Embree to work on a farm that he owned two or three miles west of Princeton. They were good hands and worked on the same farm for two years, living in a small log cabin on the farm doing their own culinary work. One of the men could read and write and often borrowed books to read from people in Princeton. When the work season was over they put in most of their time before corn would be ready to gather in hunting for game, which was very abundant.

The summer's work for the second year was over and the men had gone hunting. One morning late in the summer some one found tacked on the cabin door a short note saying they had gone to the Ohio river to cut cord wood until the corn would do to gather and this was the last time they were ever seen on the farm.

Some years later General Embree was in the city of New Orleans and found these two men working on the levee, rolling freight. They told

#### KIDNAPPING NEAR PRINCETON

him that the two men whom they had seen several times in Princeton came to their cabin early in the evening and handcuffed them and by daylight the next morning they were at the Ohio river which they crossed on a raft into Kentucky, going down to Henderson. After waiting a few days a boat came and they were carried to New Orleans where they were sold into slavery.

Mr. Embree went to a lawyer and told his story and had proceedings brought to liberate the two negroes. The investigation developed that they were sold into slavery to James Lockwell by two men named Absalom Tower and Thomas Slaven and they had been for more than three years the property of Lockwell. As no complaint had been made during that time the judge refused to release them.

## CHAPTER XXVII

---

### JOB TURNER

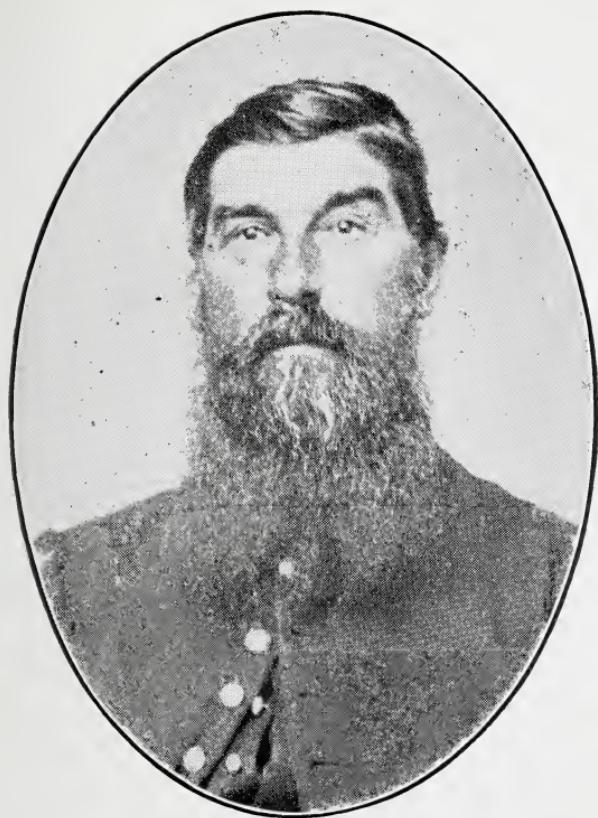
After John Bundy went to Canada, Turner had no one that he could fully rely on to help him. Uncle Simon was good help and reliable, but he was so old that he could not do much at any great distance from home. He was depended on by his master to do the chores around the house and barn. This work kept him busy every day until late in the evening. Turner kept up his regular peddling trips. In this way he became acquainted with two negro families. The men were well acquainted with the country south for quite a distance. They had hinted to Turner several times that they would like to go north. Finally they told him that many slaves had run away and gained their liberties; what hindered them from gaining their freedom, and asked him to aid them. They lived too far south to reach the Ohio river in one night but declared they could go as far as an old vacant lime stone quarry, where there were many old lime kilns standing. They felt sure they could hide there for one day and when night would come they could go on to the place agreed upon, where the guides would be awaiting them. This

## JOB TURNER'S WORK

would be about seven miles from Owensboro, Ky., and by the middle of the night they would reach the fishermen's shack east of Owensboro. Turner assured them that the guides would be at the place agreed upon on a Sunday night. Their master was away from home and would not return for several days. The overseer had been thrown from a vicious horse and had one of his arms broken. In the two families were eight persons, the two men and their wives and four children from ten to fourteen years of age. Saturday night came and they had provisions for two days prepared. As soon as it was dark they were on their way to the abandoned limestone quarry. On the second night they reached the place where the three guides awaited them. They crossed the river and reached a point about ten miles north where they hid in a large corn field and rested all day. One of the guides went on to Mr. Caswell's to inform them that early that evening eleven people would reach his place for supper. When he reached there he found three men there who were hunting three run-away slaves (who were hidden in our barn cellar). The men seemed to want to hang around Mr. Caswell's premises. Mr. Caswell told them he had no knowledge of the three slaves that they were hunting. The guide told Mr. Caswell that he was hunting work and wanted to

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

know if he needed a hand, or if not if he knew of anyone that did. Mr. Caswell told him that his farm work was mostly done and that he didn't know of anyone wanting help. The three slave hunters were not from Kentucky, but lived in the surrounding country, one at Boonville, one at Pleasantville and one at Lynnville. They were suspicious of Mr. Caswell as it was well-known that he did not believe slavery was right. Finally the guide said that he would go to the neighborhood west of there, as he knew that there were some large farmers living in that neighborhood. The slave hunters left soon after the guide departed. They went a little way on the road to Lynnville then went around a field coming into a neighborhood road that led toward the west. They did not go far when they caught up with the guide, who aimed to return to Mr. Caswell's as soon as he thought the slave hunters would be gone. They rode up to him and asked his name which he said was Stephens. They asked where he lived and he answered wherever he wore his hat. They ordered him to stop and he obeyed. They then told him that the believed he was an abolitionist and that he was watching men hunting run-away negroes, and that they intended to search him and learn what he was up to. Stephens stepped to the side of the road and unslung a Sharp's rifle and pointed



ROBERT P. HAWTHORNE.

A Worker for the Anti-Slavery League.



## JOB TURNER'S WORK

it at the nearest man's head and told him to get on his horse, and if they made any further attempt to molest him he would kill all three of them. He then ordered them to return the way they came and that he would follow them and if they did not get out of this section of country, he would give them a lesson they would long remember.

That the reader may understand how the Sharp's rifle was carried, so that it would not be seen, I will explain. There was a leather strap that had a snap at each end. This strap went around the left side of the neck and the two ends came together under the right arm where they were snapped to a staple on the gun stock. This brought the butt of the gun under the right arm and it hung down two feet and eleven inches, (I measured the gun Mr. Hansen gave me, this morning.) The gun was hid by the coat. When it was wanted for use, the left hand loosened the snaps and the weapon was in hand ready for use.

The guide waited about an hour and returned to Mr. Caswell whom he found near his barn. He related his experience with the negro hunters and Mr. Caswell was glad that the bullies were defeated. But he was uneasy for fear that they might have seen the guide return to his house. After eating his breakfast Stephens rested until dark. Mr. Caswell was uneasy and sent one of

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

his boys to see Mr. Hill, with a note explaining the situation. Hill sent back word that he would go to Lynnville and be at Caswell's by dark. Nothing further happened during the day. As soon as it was dark the guide went back to meet the other two guards and the refugees. Mr. Hill arrived at Mr. Caswell's a short time after dark and related a wonderful story. He said the slave hunters reached Lynnville and told that they had been held up by a highwayman; that they wanted to be friendly with him, asking him his name and where his home was, when he drew a breech-loading gun and ordered them to get on their horses and be going. He threatened to follow them and kill them if they did not get out of that section of the country. Guards had been placed on two of the roads to give warning if the desperado should come to town. The three slave hunters left town about two o'clock for Pleasantville:

It was an hour after dark when the guards and fugitives reached Mr. Caswell's barn, where supper was served in abundance, in the dark. When supper was finished Mr. Hill took charge of them, going by way of his home for a team and wagon. About an hour before daybreak the fugitives were safely hid in our barn cellar, where three men had been hiding for several days.

Mr. Hansen came to our home from Evans-

## JOB TURNER'S WORK

ville that day. When told of the experiences of Stephens with the three slave hunters, he said Stephens would fight, but he didn't want him to hunt up scraps. Stephens found out what all who were in this anti-slavery movement learned, that these bullying slave hunters when cornered were a lot of cowards, and were only dangerous, and that with their tongues, when three or four of them should meet with some quiet inoffensive man whom they thought was anti-slavery in sentiment. Men engaged in such a despicable calling as kidnapping free negroes and selling them into slavery, or running down a poor fugitive slave, trying to gain his freedom, could be nothing but a coward. No honorable, brave man would do it. Slavery was sanctioned by law, yet it was the crowning shame that befouled our statutes.

A message was sent to Dr. Posey that we would be at his place that night, or at the river, whichever he thought best. During that day Mr. Hansen was at our house. Dr. Posey wrote my father by the returning messenger that only a little while before the messenger reached him, Mr. Robert Hawthorn was in his office and told him that there were eight or ten tough men who had drifted to this part of Indiana, by following up the Wabash and Erie canal. Three of them were working at his mill, three or four staying around

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

canal locks at Hosmer and the rest of them about Petersburg, putting in their time at Jack Kinman's gambling house. He advised that great caution be exercised or the anti-slavery people might get into trouble.

These toughs claimed that several of their men were badly treated by a lot of armed men who were in a wagon. Their men were doing nothing, they claimed, only stopped the wagon just for fun and told the people in the wagon that they had a right to examine every wagon that passed over that road. To their surprise four or five men, armed, jumped out of the wagon and chased their men into the woods. They claim for that bad treatment they intend to have revenge. They assert that they have seen the same wagon pass many times before and the next time it passes they intend to capture it. He said that if we sent the negroes that night it would be well to have a strong guard with them. That the young fellow working for Mr. Hawthorn and their mates, might try to capture them. The doctor said that he thought that it would be safe to send the fugitives to his coal bank. John Stucky would be on the lookout for them.

My father gave Dr. Posey's letter to Mr. Hansen, who after reading it, said that he thought it would be best to send the negroes forward under

## JOB TURNER'S WORK

a strong guard. He thought that the threatening fellows that Dr. Posey told about would have no knowledge of our coming, and that all these bravado fellows needed was a good lesson, one that would teach them that when they fool with fire they are liable to get burned. Hansen further said that one of his spys was at Boonville and he intended to send him on to Lawrenceburg, but he would delay it for awhile and order him to Mr. Hawthorn's sawmill, and have him get acquainted with the men referred to in Dr. Posey's letter. He closed by saying: "This spy is a boat maker from the state of Massachusetts. I am needing some boats for the young fishermen at Evansville. This spy can come into this section and become acquainted with the anti-slavery people, who are working to help the slaves gain their freedom. He will then go to Mr. Hawthorn's and select some lumber and make three skiffs. At Mr. Hawthorn's he will be in favor of slavery. In this way he will get into the confidence of the men working at the mill, and of their confederates. Through this spy it will be easy to find out if the men who are making these threats are really vicious, or a lot of smart Alecks, who are only dangerous in their own imaginations. The anti-slavery people do not want to cause anyone trouble that do not deserve

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

it, but if they get in the way and attempt to block our work, they may expect to be paid in their own coin."

We got everything ready to take the negroes to Dr. Posey's coal bank. It was decided that we would make the trip on foot. Two of the guards, Mr. Hill, myself and two young men working on the farm for my father, were to go. In this way we could go around places where we were likely to be seen on the main road. By the time it was dark we were on the way, going on by-roads when we could. Everything went well until we crossed Dongola bridge. Soon after we got out of the Patoka bottoms, the road ran through a thick woods. It was a very dark night. The guard in front said he heard several horses coming and the voices of men talking. We got out of the road a little way and soon the horsemen went by. From their talk we thought they were going to picket the Dongola bridge.

When we were about two miles from Petersburg we came near a large field that was lit up with many lanterns and many burning chunk piles. There was a large drove of cattle in the field. I never saw such a sight before or since. There would be ten or twelve of them at the same time running, pitching and bellowing. Some would fall down and roll on the ground. Mr. Hill told

## JOB TURNER'S WORK

us that the cattle had been fed in a field where hogs had been feeding on corn that had been cut up when the stalks were green. The hogs would partly chew the stalk and leave it. The cattle would eat the splintered stalks, and it was these hard glazed pieces that had lacerated their intestines, and they were raving with the pain and would die.

We reached Petersburg and met John Stucky, who was looking for us. We went to the coal bank and Stuckey hid the negroes safely. He said on the next night they would forward the refugees to northern Davies county.

We returned home with nothing happening worthy of mention. The cattle were still showing signs of distress but we saw no one around the fires. We crossed the Patoka river on the canal aqueduct as we felt pretty sure that the bridge was being watched. When we got a little south of Dongola Tom Midcalf and one of the guards asked Mr. Hill to let them go back and find the horses of the bridge watchers and turn them loose. Mr. Hill agreed to the proposition provided they would not hurt the horses, only to turn them loose and unbuckle their girths so that they would lose their saddles. The others of the party would rest and wait half an hour for their return. They soon got back and said that they had done as Mr.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Hill told them to do, but Midcalf told me confidentially before we reached home that the horses would have to carry a brush with them when fly time should come.

## CHAPTER XVIII

---

### JOHN DAVENPORT

Mr. Hansen sent one of his spies from Boonville, Indiana, and he was with the anti-slavery people here and Dongola, for three days, when he went to Mr. Hawthorn with a letter of introduction from my father. John Davenport was his name. Mr. Hawthorn found him a place to board. Selecting some good lumber Davenport went to work making skiffs. He soon got acquainted with the men working for Mr. Hawthorn. Three of these he found to be intensely proslavery, being very loud in declaring what they would do, if they got a chance, to capture run-away negroes. And they declared that if opportunity offered they would kidnap any negro and sell him into slavery. It was their declared belief that all negroes should be slaves and that free negroes should not be permitted to live among white people.

Davenport was a good fellow with these men, and they had a number of friends whom they wanted Davenport to meet, so they arranged for a meeting to be held at a vacant house, a few nights ahead. At the appointed time they were all there and all the strangers were introduced to

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Davenport. It was suggested that it would be a good thing to hold a meeting each week and call it a Literary Club. The by-laws provided that the membership should be restricted to not more than twelve in number and that all the meetings should be secret. (For fear that they might get some members in the club that were anti-slavery in principle, Davenport had Hawthorn examine the list of names, which he found to be pro-slavery. Everyone of them had been on hunts, trying to capture run-away slaves).

Davenport had a nest of three skiffs, the first, a very large one, the second a medium sized one and the third smaller, so they all fit in a nest, requiring the room of only one skiff. A team and wagon transported the skiffs to Evansville. Davenport went with the boats. On his return he attended the meeting of the club and told the members that he had seen a camp of woodchoppers, of twelve or fifteen men, all free negro men. They told him that they would have their present contract done in six or eight days, and that he had asked them if they would like to have a contract to chop one thousand cords of wood at sixty-five cents a cord. They said that they would be glad to have the contract and would be ready to commence work in one week's time. He said that he did not close the contract, as he did not feel like

#### JOHN DAVENPORT'S WORK.

making such a large deal without the consent of all the members. A motion was made by one of the members and adopted, authorizing Davenport to go and see the woodchoppers and close up the contract with them, and have them move up to a large double log building that stood near the canal about two and a half miles east of where the aqueduct crossed the Patoka river.

A committee of three was appointed to have the old log boarding house fixed up for the newcomers. Davenport asked if all the members were present and being assured that they were, he addressed them as follows: "Gentlemen, you have selected me to make an arrangement with fifteen free negro woodchoppers to place themselves in our power so that we can kidnap them and sell them into slavery. This is in direct opposition to the laws of the United States. If we should be caught we would have trouble to save our liberties. Aside from this we are planning to deprive fifteen men, who are free born, of their liberties for life. It will be well that you think this matter over carefully, then if you want to go ahead I am with you."

After free discussion for a while they resolved unanimously that Davenport should go and hire the woodchoppers.

At the next meeting of the club Davenport reported that he had closed the contract with the

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

woodchoppers and that they would be at the old log boarding house Friday evening of that same week and he added, "They have three good teams and wagons that we can use in taking the negroes south."

There was a controversy about what they would do with the negroes when captured. It was finally settled that they would sell them to a negro trader who lived near Owensboro, Ky. Davenport said this man bought all negroes offered him, but only paid two-thirds of the value of kidnapped negroes. This was decided to be the best thing that they could do. The club concluded that it would send Davenport to see the slave trader and make final arrangements with him. There would be plenty of time for this before the woodchoppers would arrive.

The next meeting of the club was on Thursday night. Davenport was there and reported that he had seen the slave merchant and he had agreed to receive the negroes on the north side of the Ohio river, as he had a strongly built flat boat there that he could load them in and keep them until he had acquired a sufficient number, then he would take them to the cotton country. But he would not agree to pay more than eight hundred dollars for any kidnapped negro.

While Davenport was pretending to be away

## JOHN DAVENPORT'S WORK.

on business for his club, he was with others, making arrangements to complete the trap that was being set to catch the men who were so ready to kidnap free negroes and sell them into slavery. Isham Booker, a mulatto, was sent to the Cherry Grove, west of Princeton, Indiana, and secured the help of the four negroes who had helped kidnap the kidnappers, described in a former chapter. Mr. Hansen sent two of his guards who had come to my father's with four fugitives. George Hill was selected as leader, in charge of the men. Wesley Simpson, Hiram Knight, Thomas Hart, Obadiah Naley, myself and five negro men, with the two guards, composed the party representing the supposed party of woodchoppers.

The woodchoppers' wagons arrived at the vacant boarding house a little after dark. The horses were hitched to the wagon beds and fed. The woodchoppers had prepared a luncheon before starting, sufficient to meet their needs for the day. After satisfying their hunger they entered the house and snuffed out the candle lights.

It was understood with Davenport that he would lead his club in at the south door and line them up against the south wall. The woodchoppers would be lying on the north side of the room asleep, as they would be very tired from so long a journey. Soon the club men were heard approach-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

ing the house. Quietly, they slipped into the room. It was very dark and Davenport lighted a candle when, to their surprise, there stood before them all around the room armed men! Some of these hard Sharps rifles presented at the club men and others had axes drawn ready to strike them down. Other candles were lighted. Mr. Hill ordered the would-be kidnappers to hold up their hands and then ordered two of the negroes to disarm them. He then demanded of them to explain their conduct. Davenport replied that they were a literary club and held their meetings in that room. Mr. Hill asked Davenport why he had hired the wood-choppers when he had no timber to cut into wood? The answers were unsatisfactory. The spokesman asserted that it was a scheme to get the wood-choppers in his power so that he and his confederates could kidnap them and sell them into slavery. Each man was asked, individually, what he came there for but not one, excepting Davenport, would utter a word. There was no doubt but all the clubmen (excepting Davenport) believed their captors were negro woodchoppers, for all were blacked up and thoroughly disguised.

The leader, Mr. Hill, made a little speech that must have added to their alarm: "When we got here we didn't dream that a trap was set to catch us, until an old gray-headed man came out of this

#### JOHN DAVENPORT'S WORK.

house and told us to be on our guard, that some young men aimed to capture us and sell us into slavery. We are fully convinced by your actions that he told us the truth. If justice was meted out to you, we would kill everyone of you."

At this point Davenport defied them to do their worst, that he did not fear a thousand negroes, that they all should be slaves. He became so boisterous that our leader ordered him taken out of the house and if he made any attempt to escape to kill him. He was still defiant and started to run when we could hear heavy blows as if he was being beaten to death. Soon one of the men who had charge of Davenport returned and told our leader that they had killed their prisoner and asked what should be done with the body. He was told to throw it into the canal, (which was full of water and only a short distance away). Our leader then told the remaining members of the club, that men who would volunteer willingly to kidnap men who were freeborn, and plan to tear them away from their wives and children, to sell them into slavery for life, deserved death. But they would not kill the remainder of them, only put a mark on each of them that would stay with them as long as they lived. Two strong men held each victim and another with a sharp knife cut the lobe off of the left ear. By the time each of

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

the eleven men had received his mark they were a bloody looking sight. They were led outside the house and told to go. Our band harnessed horses to the wagons and we were soon on our way to our homes. We had not gone far when Davenport joined us.

In the fall of 1864 I was in command of the Post Military Prison at Nashville, Tennessee. One day one of the prison guards was badly hurt trying to arrest a deserter, and was sent to the hospital. Next morning I went to the hospital to see the injured guard. While passing through the hospital yard I saw a man sawing wood with a buck-saw. Looking closely I recognized him at Robert Hawthorn of Petersburg, Indiana. I asked him what this meant. He told me the following story: "Thomas Hart and I were on our way to join the 42nd Indiana regiment and owing to some minor ailments we were sent to this hospital for treatment. Because I didn't understand the art of making up beds, a little red headed rooster they call a hospital steward, put me on double duty." I asked him if he and Hart were well enough to leave the hospital and he answered that they were. I then told him to go to his ward and get his baggage and have Hart get his and both come down to the office. I went into the office and found Dr. Thurston, a regular army surgeon, and told him



JOHN DAVENPORT.

A spy for the Anti-Slavery League.



#### JOHN DAVENPORT'S WORK.

about the hospital army steward having Hawthorn on double duty and asked that I be allowed to receipt for the two soldiers, that I had good rooms and bedding for them near my office where I could keep them until I had an opportunity to send them to the regiment. The doctor granted my request and when the two soldiers came I introduced them to the doctor, who asked Hawthorn why the hospital steward had put him on double duty. Hawthorn repeated the story he had told to me. The doctor at once sent for the hospital steward. As soon as I saw him I was sure that I had seen him before. His hair was parted so that a long lock completely covered his left ear. The doctor heard his statement of his reasons for punishing Hawthorn, and then told him he had done a mean thing. That hereafter when any punishment was to be inflicted, that he must report the matter to the Doctor, who would decide what punishment should be inflicted. After Hawthorn and Hart were gone I told Dr. Thurston that I was sure I knew the hospital steward and believed that he knew Hawthorn and for that reason was punishing him. I then told the doctor what I had learned about the kidnappers visit to the old boarding house and how it terminated. The doctor said he had several calls at other hospitals to make that morning and that in the afternoon he would inspect the post military

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

prison and would have the hospital steward with him, and would manage some way to examine his left ear.

In the afternoon Dr. Thurston came to my office and told me that the hospital steward showed him his left ear and told him the following story: "There was a literary club that used an old abandoned house to hold their meetings in. There were twelve or fifteen free negro men who had a contract to do some work in that section, that took possession of our club room to live in while doing the work. One evening we went to hold a club meeting and found all these negroes there. They became greatly excited and said we had come there to kidnap them. They surrounded us and penned us in the room and pretended to hold a trial over us. Our leader became defiant and said many insulting things to them, for which they took him out and killed him. Then they decided that we should be marked by having the lobe of the left ear cut off, which was done."

I asked the doctor to have the hospital steward come to the office as I wanted to talk to him in his presence. I told them that at the time of the planned raid on the woodchoppers that an old man living as a hermit in the old boarding house had put the woodchoppers wise when they came there. That the hermit pretended to go away but as soon

#### JOHN DAVENPORT'S WORK.

as the lights were extinguished he slipped back and through a hole made in the chinking between the logs of the house, saw everything that transpired within after the candles were lighted until the club men were released. I told the steward that what was said here would not be repeated and asked him where the club men went on the night after they were released, and how it was that they disappeared so completely that no one in that section knew anything about them after that night. I remarked that Mr. Hawthorn had told me several years ago that he had three young men working for him at his mill. They worked till six o'clock one evening, leaving the mill for their boarding house and he never saw or heard of them afterward. The things they left at their boarding house were never called for.

The steward said that as soon as they were released they went to the old house where the club held their meetings and one of their number went after Dr. B. F. Adams, who lived near. The doctor soon came with lint and bandages, also remedies to stop the bleeding of the wounds, and soon fixed them up in good shape. "We had a time getting the blood off our clothes," said the steward, "the doctor assured us that he would not say a word about his night's work. We paid him twenty-two dollars for treating the eleven men.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

We had the doctor go to find out if any boats were due that night on the canal. He soon returned and told us that a passenger boat would go north at 2 o'clock a. m. and that a freight boat, then in the locks would go south some time in the after part of the night. Eight of the men went on the boat going north and three of us went on the boat south to Evansville. After I separated from the two men that went to Evansville with me, I have never seen or heard of any of the eleven men. Mr. Hawthorn and you are the only persons from that part of the country that I have seen since that awful night."

## CHAPTER XXIX

---

### INTERESTING LETTERS.

The thirteen letters that follow were secured from prominent politicians and military men several years ago, to be used in a work that the Author contemplated publishing. They fit so aptly into this work that they are submitted to the readers of this volume.

---

**Senator Cullom of Illinois**

Oakland City, Indiana,

January 17, 1886.

Hon. Shelby M. Cullom,  
Washington, D. C.

My Dear Senator:

I feel that you will pardon me for writing you on this subject. I feel that I have known you all my life as we have lived but a little over a hundred miles apart for so many years. I am collecting letters from many parts of the United States from prominent men of different political faiths. I feel free to ask you in your own way to answer the two questions that you will find below on this sheet.

Question: Which added the most to the over-

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

throw of slavery Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

Very respectfully yours,

W. M. Cockrum.

---

The United States Senate,

Washington, D. C.,

March 12, 1886.

Hon. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Indiana.

My Dear Mr. Cockrum:

Your letter with the two questions you asked me has lain on my desk for some time. I have been very busy. I hardly feel competent to give you a comprehensive answer to either of the questions. There is but little doubt that they were strong factors in bringing about the destruction of slavery. I well remember the first time I saw Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin." I was in southern Illinois not far from Cairo. A lawyer with whom I had business handed me a copy of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and said that this book will divide the South from the North. This Lawyer was a hot-headed pro-slavery man as many others were in that section at that time. I laughed at him and asked him how such a book could have such wonderful power as he seemed to think it had.

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

He said if the charges against the South for the way the slaves were treated were true, it would damn any people upholding such conduct and if they were not true (and he believed they were false) it would raise such a feeling of indignation and hatred in the South, that they would pull apart and finally divide the country. This lawyer when the war came on went back to his native state, Tennessee, and assisted in raising a regiment and went into the army for the South and was killed at the battle of Stone River.

The fugitive slave law of 1850 was without a doubt unconstitutional. Many of its provisions were aimed to offend the abolitionists. If it had done no more harm than that, it would not have been so bad, but there were many clauses in that law that were so favorable to the South that free-booters both north and south took advantage of it and kidnapped free negroes and sold them into slavery in the South. In the state of Illinois bordering on the Ohio river nearly all the free negroes were kidnapped and sold into slavery in the lower cotton country of the South.

Very truly yours,

Shelby M. Cullum.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Senator Voorhees

Oakland City, Indiana,

October 20, 1874.

Honorable D. W. Voorhees,  
Terre Haute, Indiana.

Dear Senator:

I feel that you will not consider me rude in writing you as I have. I am gathering letters from prominent men of different political opinions in many sections of the United States. I feel free to write you. I have a very vivid recollection of getting a thorough wetting listening to your fine oratory at Princeton, Ind., a few years ago. I want to ask you in your own way to answer the two questions below on this sheet.

Question: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery—Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

Very truly yours,  
W. M. Cockrum.

---

Terre Haute, Indiana,  
May 23, 1875.

Col. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Ind.

My Dear Mr. Cockrum:

Your letter with the questions have been re-

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

ceived. The effect that the two questions produced in this country was wonderful. Mrs. Stowe had not the least idea what a dreadful row her book would cause. It was received in the South as a gauntlet thrown down by the abolitionists and raised a tremendous excitement in every part of the South that did not cool down until after the war was over. Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850 was not intended to be used by mean thieving men to kidnap free negroes and sell them into slavery. There is but little doubt that the southern members put everything into that unfortunate law to hurt the abolitionists that they could.

The two questions that you have asked, no doubt were some of the leading causes for the overthrow of slavery.

Very truly,  
D. W. Voorhees.

---

Senator Morton, of Indiana

Oakland City, Indiana,

Jan. 22, 1875.

Senator Oliver P. Morton,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator:

I am gathering letters from many prominant men of this country both North and South—men

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

who are of different political faith. Knowing the distinguished abilities that you have shown in the State and National affairs, I would like to have you write as you feel about the two questions below on this sheet. I have the honor of having four of your commissions sent me during the four years of war. The question: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery—Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

Very respectfully yours,  
W. M. Cockrum.

---

Washington, D. C.,  
Feb. 15, 1875.

Col. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Ind.  
My Dear Colonel:

Your father and I are real friends. He was a true old time whig in politics. I first met him when he was in the Legislature of 1852. From that acquaintance we have been life long friends. I remember five or six years ago that you were with your Father at Petersburg attending one of my political meetings. I have recently sent him

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

several public documents. Please convey to him my best wishes for his health and happiness. In answering the two questions I will have to be governed by the effect that they produced on the people of the North and South. Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was the first bodily blow that the slave owners got. It was a novel of the very best type, yet it was a mighty true one and could not be successfully answered. The truths it told about the way the slaves were treated was very damaging to the slave owners and made them furiously mad. They never attempted to answer the charges, but they took their revenge by abusing the people of the North. Their newspapers made most hideous caricatures about the Anti-Slavery people of the North showing negro equality as they expressed it by picturing a big black negro with a white wife. In my opinion "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had much to do with causing the South to attempt secession. Senator Mason's fugitive slave law was a very unfair law, and no doubt it was unconstitutional, if it had been tested. It added hundreds of thousands of indifferent people to the Anti-Slavery ranks and no doubt was a real factor in the destruction of slavery.

Very truly yours,

Oliver P. Morton.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Senator Roger Q. Mills, of Texas.

Oakland City, Indiana,

October 25, 1895.

Senator Roger Q. Mills,  
Corsicana, Texas.

My Dear Senator:

There ought to be a good feeling of comradeship between us. I was on the great battlefield of Chickamauga where you did such clean cut fighting with your brigade after General Deshler was killed. By your same brigade I received a wound through my hip that has made me lame for life, and from that field I was carried to Libby Prison. I am not to be understood as complaining, but as that Great Park at Chickamauga is made to honor American Heroism, confederate and federal alike, I felt that I could claim you as a comrade. I want to ask you at your leisure to answer me as you feel, two questions that are below stated on this paper.

Very truly yours,

W. M. Cockrum.

Question: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

Senate Chamber Washington, D. C.

Dec. 20, 1895.

Colonel W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Indiana.

My Dear Col. Cockrum:

Your letter of Oct., 25, 1895, is at hand containing your request for comradeship, also the two questions that you want me to answer. I believe in the brotherhood of man and think that any differences we may have had in the sixties should all be lost sight of, and as a great United Nation should go forward hand in hand to the great destiny that belongs to this great country.

I am sorry that my brigade wounded you, but I am real glad that you survived that wound and that you are so well as to be able to be a commissioner, on that same battlefield where the heroism of the American Soldier is being so fully carried out. I feel that everything should be done to set aside all difference that may have been and let us be a united people. The time may come when it will be necessary for us all to pull together as one man in defence of our homes. No doubt you and I will be out of it before that time comes. The Question: Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was a very readable book and would have been considered only a spicy novel had not so many hot heads took exception to it and raised such a

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

furore over the country. I don't know how much it influenced the war party to bring on the war. The part of Texas that was much interested in slavery was but a small portion; and outside of the portion bordering on the State of Louisiana, slavery never was profitable.

Senator Mason was governed by the leading hot heads in Congress when he got the fugitive slave law of 1850 put on the statute book. That law no doubt was very galling to the North and turned hundreds of thousands of men who were indifferent about slavery to become open enemies of the South. Colonel, I hope sometime to meet you and we will talk the stirring times of the sixties over.

Very kindly yours,  
Roger Q. Mills.

---

General A. P. Stewart  
Oakland City, Indiana,  
July 12, 1895.

General A. P. Stewart,  
Park Hotel,  
Chickamauga, Georgia.

Dear General Stewart:

The questions I am asking you about are on the same lines that we have talked about on several occasions when I was at the Park Hotel. I

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

feel that you will not think me rude by asking you in your own way to answer the two questions that you will find lower down on this same sheet. I have submitted these questions to a large number of leading citizens of our country. Politicians, Theologians and many who held high positions in the Federal and Confederate Armies. I am General,

Your obedient servant,  
W. M. Cockrum.

Question: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

---

Park Hotel, Chickamauga, Georgia,  
October, 7, 1895.

Col. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Indiana.

My Dear Colonel:

I do remember many conversations that we had on various causes for the war. I don't think that I am competent to give an answer on the two questions that would be received as satisfactory by the reading public.

I read Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin"

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

soon after it came out. I thought it was a very readable book. The many charges of the earlier workings of slavery were not borne out by my knowledge of slavery in the sections of the south where I was the best acquainted, but that was not in the cotton and sugar districts. It may have been different there.

The fugitive slave law of 1850 was a needed law for the owners of slaves, to keep those who were opposed to slavery from running the slaves away. The penalty attached to that law was all the hope the slave holders had of ever recapturing their fugitive slaves.

There were many designing men who took advantage and kidnapped free negroes and sold them into slavery. I saw in a newspaper some time ago a statement that there were five northern men engaged in the kidnapping business to where there was one from the south.

What part each one of the questions bore to the destruction of slavery would be hard to estimate, but without a doubt they both added their full share in bringing about the overthrow of slavery.

Sincerely yours,

A. P. Stewart.

(General Stewart commanded a confederate division in the army of the Tennessee for two

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

years and in the Atlanta campaign. Bishop Polk's head was shot off by a cannon ball and General Stewart was put in command of that corps and had charge of it until the close of the war.—Author.)

---

General Wm. Brimage Bates, of Tennessee  
Oakland City, Indiana,  
Sept. 12, 1896.

General Wm. B. Bates,  
Nashville, Tenn.

My Dear General:

You no doubt remember that I served on a committee with you and General Buckner and General Turchin about the monument of General James Deshler, who was killed at Chickamauga. You may think I am presumptuous to ask you such questions as I have below at this late period after the great war. General, I believe that you belong to the broad minded ranks of statesmen and will feel free to say what you think.

The questions are, which added most to the overthrow of slavery in the United States, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

Very respectfully yours,  
W. M. Cockrum.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Nashville, Tennessee,

November 16, 1896.

Col. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Ind.

Dear Colonel:

I have your letter and have noted the questions you ask. My opinion of Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is that it was a well written novel and was very readable. Had it not been that so many newspapers in the North referring to the book, made so many unfavorable comments against the South and in so many ways made such damaging statements declaring that they were true, the book would not have been received in the South with such bitter criticisms from the southern press.

The fugitive slave law of 1850 was the outgrowth of many denunciations of slavery by the abolitionists of the North. There were many provisions in that law that were not needed and no doubt put there to goad the Anti-Slavery people of the North. The two questions had the same effect. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" made the North many bitter enemies in the South. The fugitive slave law of 1850 made the South many bitter enemies in the North.

Very truly,  
Wm. B. Bates.

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

(To show something of the nerve of General Bates, I will relate an instance told me by General A. P. Stewart, who commanded the Division that General Bates' brigade belonged to. The first day of the Battle of Chickamauga, there was given to General Bates 500 men to fill out his brigade. They had no arms. General S. B. Buckner, who commanded the corps, was with General Stewart making an inspection of his command. Coming to Bates who had his brigdade in line and riding along the front, Buckner saw a large number of men without guns. Turning to General Bates he said: "General where are you going to get arms for these men?" Bates faced General Buckner and saluting him said: "I am going to capture them!" And he did.)

---

**Senator B. F. Wade, of Ohio.**

Oakland City, Indiana,

January 10, 1876.

Hon. B. F. Wade,

Washington, D. C.

My Dear Mr. Wade:

I don't mean to be impertinent but if you will answer as you believe the two questions, I shall be grateful.

Question: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

Respectfully yours,

W. M. Cockrum.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Ashtabula, Ohio,

July 19, 1876.

Mr. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Ind.

Mr. Dear Sir:

The Questions you ask is one question with two heads. Mrs. Stowe was inspired by her love of liberty in writing "Uncle Tom's Cabin." She only intended to write a few numbers for the National Era, an Anti-Slavery paper published then at Washington, D. C. These articles took like wild fire and there was such a demand for more that she wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Nothing before had ever stirred the South to such a degree of hatred for the abolitionists as that book; and it was one of the main things in bringing about the Great War, that destroyed the great monster slavery.

The obnoxious fugitive slave law that was passed by Congress in 1850, to aid the South in re-capturing their runaway slaves and make the Anti-Slavery people help them. This law turned hundreds of thousands of people in the North against slavery who cared but little about it until they saw that the slave owners had made a law so that they could kidnap a free negro, carry him before a commissioner and have him adjudged to be their property. The negro had nothing to say

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

in the matter and was sent South and put into slavery. This unlawful business added much to bringing on the war and the overthrow of slavery.

My old partner, Hon. Joshua R. Gidding, said when he first saw Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," that it was a hundred pound bomb inspired by God and fired at the damnable curse of slavery and the explosion would be heard around the entire world.

Very truly,  
B. F. Wade.

(Mr. Wade was elected to the United States Senate in 1851 where his long years of service won for him a never-ending reputation. He was in the advance in the Anti-Slavery movements while his indomitable pluck, hard hitting speeches, without a particle of polish, rendered him a most conspicuously effective champion. During the time of the Nebraska debate, Mr. Badger, a member from North Carolina, described himself as wishing to emigrate to the new territory and to carry his old colored mamma with him. The slave woman who had nursed him in infancy, and childhood and whom he had loved as a real mother and he could not take her. The enemies of this most benevolent measure forbade him. "We are unwilling you should take the old lady there" interupted Wade. "We are afraid you will sell her when you get her there." This was received with a roar of laughter, and silenced Mr. Badger.)

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Senator Brownlow, of Tennessee.

Oakland City, Indiana,

May 14, 1875.

Senator Wm. G. Brownlow,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Brownlow:

I don't mean to be impertinent in writing to you. I have read of you since I was a small boy. I saw you many times at Nashville during the war. Will you, at your leisure, answer the two questions below stated on this paper?

Question: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

Respectfully yours,  
W. M. Cockrum.

---

Washington, D. C.,  
June 11, 1875.

Mr. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Indiana.

My Dear Mr. Cockrum:

Your letter with the questions you have requested me to answer have been received. I think that Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" made the

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

southern fire eaters madder than anything that was done to them before. You know that it was said in the Bible days that those the Lord wished to destroy he first made mad. The slave holding elements were very careful to have destroyed every copy of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," that they could hear of. I got a chance and sent to Cincinnati for a copy, which I got in due time. I kept it hid and every time I had an opportunity I read it. The book was interesting to a high degree. It told about one-half the truth. Mrs. Stowe had not a chance to see the worst part of slavery—that could only be seen in the black district of Louisiana, or in some parts of South Carolina where the negroes were treated much worse than the dumb brutes were. Ten or a dozen living in a small shanty and sometimes in sand dunes that look like haystacks in a meadow without a particle of ventilation.

Senator Mason, when he got the fugitive slave law of 1850 put on the statute book, felt that he had given the abolitionists a dig that would make them mighty sick; but it was like a man that was preparing a rope to hang others and was himself hanged on it. Many things were the cause of the overthrow of slavery. I am of the opinion that the two questions had much to do with its downfall.

I don't know what use you want to make of

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

my scribbles, but do anything you want to with it. I am,

Yours truly,  
W. G. Brownlow.

---

**Senator Matthew Stanley Quay, of Pennsylvania.**

Oakland City, Indiana,  
July 22, 1896.

Hon. Matthew Stanley Quay,  
Washington, D. C.

My Dear Senator Quay:

You may think that I am presumptuous in asking two such questions as these below on this page. I feel free to come to you in this way. I have worked in the same political harness with you so many years that I feel that I know you. At your leisure I want you to answer the two questions as you think best. The questions are: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery in the United States—Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

Very respectfully yours,  
W. M. Cockrum.

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

Hon. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Indiana.

My Dear Mr. Cockrum:

The action of the ingredients in the two questions were the same. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" angered the South as nothing before ever had. In one of the black parishes of Louisiana, the negroes were given a holiday. A number of "Uncle Tom's Cabins" had been secured and a dummy of Mrs. Stowe was made. They were all gathered in a public square and the negroes were made to burn the dummy and the books. These self-estimated superior Southerners were so determined in their madness that, like the mad adder, bit themselves and were more determined to dissolve the Union than ever before. The fugitive slave law of 1850 had the effect to make the northern people more intense in their opposition to slavery. Whilst it in some cases aided the southern slave owner in capturing his runaway slaves, it added hundreds of thousands of indifferent northern people to the anti-slavery cause. Many of them did everything they could to help the fugitive slaves gain their liberties. The two questions were directly opposite each other, yet they worked together in bringing on the great war that freed the slaves.

Yours truly,  
Matthew S. Quay.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Honorable David Turpie, United States Senator  
from Indiana.

Oakland City, Indiana,

Sept. 26, 1892.

Hon. David Turpie,  
Logansport, Ind.

My Dear Senator:

As one of your constituents I have the honor to ask that you, at your leisure, give me your opinion on the two questions below. I feel that you will not consider me impertinent by thus writing you; knowing of your scholarly attainments, I feel that you will be glad to add your part in building up the history of our great country. There are so many important subjects that have been almost left blank.

Question: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery—Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

Yours truly,  
W. M. Cockrum.

---

Washington, D. C.,  
December 16, 1892.

Mr. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Ind.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter and note the request you

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

have made. Believing that your actions are governed by the interest that you have in education and not by curiosity, I have concluded to answer your questions with as few words as I can to make myself understood.

Mrs. Stowe builded better than she knew for it was her "Uncle Tom's Cabin" that fired the South to such a heat that it never cooled and the secession of many states was attempted. Senator Mason felt that the South had borne the nagging of the abolitionists so long that he would give them something to fuss about, and the fugitive slave law of 1850 was passed and became the law of the land. This was a bomb fired by the South that acted as a boomerang and did the South much more harm than it did the North. I think that the two questions had much to do with bringing on the war and thereby the overthrow of slavery.

Truly yours,  
David Turpie.

---

**General Buckner.**

Park Hotel, Chickamauga, Georgia,

Sept. 23, 1895.

General S. B. Buckner,

Reed House, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Dear General Buckner:

We are so far removed from the ruinous ef-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

fects of the war, and our country has made such rapid strides toward the great position that we will fill in the world's history that it seems almost as if the millenium year had commenced to dawn. When the thunder of war was roaring on the great Chickamauga battlefield, little did we think that in less than forty years this great country would be united and the contending armies on that bloody field would be working hand in hand, building great monuments, honoring the American soldiers of the North and the South alike.

General Buckner, I am a writer of history and would feel greatly complimented if you would in your own way answer the two questions below stated on this sheet.

Question: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery—Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

Very respectfully yours,  
W. M. Cockrum.

---

Chattanooga, Tennessee, Sept. 25, 1895.  
Col. W. M. Cockrum,  
Park Hotel, Chickamauga, Georgia.  
My Dear Sir:

I remember you as a commissioner on the

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

Park from Indiana. I also remember that you and General Turchin, of Illinois, were selected to serve with General Bates and myself in a wrangle about a position on the Chickamauga Park.

The two questions that you ask me to answer are of such a character that I am at a loss for information that would enable me to answer them intelligently. I am of the opinion that Mrs. Stowe's book was received by the South as a challenge from the North, and caused many bitter things to be said and done that would not have happened if that book had never been written.

The fugitive slave law of 1850 was made so that men who owned runaway slaves could recapture them. It was no doubt a just law, if it had not been taken advantage of by bad thieving men who kidnapped free negroes and sold them into slavery. I saw a statement in some publication that three-fourths of the kidnapping was done by Northern men.

I am truly yours,

S. B. Buckner.

---

**General James Longstreet.**

Oakland City, Indiana,

Oct. 15, 1895.

\* General James Longstreet,

My Dear General:

At the dedication of the Great Military Park

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

on the Chickamauga Battlefield, I had the honor of escorting you and General Palmer, of Illinois, to the Indiana Headquarters and of introducing you to Governor Matthews, of Indiana. At that dedication was the only time I ever saw you. During the war I had no special anxiety to meet you. General, I am collecting letters from prominent men in all parts of the United States. Below on this page you will find two questions that I would be pleased to have you answer in your own way. From no one would I appreciate a letter more than from the gallant commander of the fighting first corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. I am

Very truly yours,

W. M. Cockrum.

Question: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery—Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

---

Gainesville, Georgia,  
November 8, 1875.

Col. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Indiana.

My Dear Mr. Cockrum:

I have your letter. I do recollect you; you took General Palmer and me in what you said was an "Indiana Carryall" to visit your Governor and

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

returned us to the hotel. As to the questions I am at a loss to know how to answer them. I was for four years at West Point, and as soon as I was through there I was ordered to Mexico and when that war was over I was put on duty in the West and was many years on out-post duty. Then the civil war came on. I had no chance to know much about the civil affairs of the country, either north or south. My Father had a few slaves that were not very profitable. One he gave to me when I was about home, named Daniel. This old slave was very faithful, but I was most of the time in the territory of the West, that was not in favor of slavery, so I could not have Daniel with me. When I went into the Confederate service, I called for Daniel. He, by this time, was old and had the rheumatism, but he was a great help to me. After the war Daniel, of course was free. I was so poor that I could not do anything for him. Finally, I got into business, and when I had some money I concluded to hunt Daniel up and found that he, with several of my father's family slaves were all left at Macon, Mississippi. I went to see them. Daniel was still doing little jobs and got money out of it to keep him from want. By this time Daniel had got to be an exhorter in a negro church. He was mighty glad to see me, but was more interested in my spiritual welfare than anything else. In

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

one of his calls he said, "Massa Jim, do you belong to any church?" "Oh yes," I said, "I try to be a good Christian." He laughed loud and long, and said, "Something must have scared you awful bad to change you so from what you were when I had to care for you." As to the questions you asked me I have this to say that I never saw a copy of Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and I did not know of such a fugitive slave law as the one you ask about, until after the war. No doubt you will think me a dummy in fact.

With a soldier's handshake at a distance, I bid you goodby,

James Longstreet.

---

Hon. William D. Kelley.

Oakland City, Indiana,

February 17, 1888.

Hon. William D. Kelley,  
Washington, D. C.

My Dear Mr. Kelley:

I am collecting letters from prominent men in all parts of our country. Knowing the busy life that you lead working for the welfare of this country, I hesitate to bother you with this. If you can have time I would be pleased if you would in your own way answer the two questions below on this sheet.

## THIRTEEN INTERESTING LETTERS

Question: Which added the most to the overthrow of slavery—Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or Senator Mason's fugitive slave law of 1850?

Very respectfully yours,  
W. M. Cockrum.

---

Washington, D. C.,  
November 20, 1888.

Mr. W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Indiana.

My Dear Sir:

Your letter of some months ago has been neglected owing to so much accumulated business. Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe "wrote better than she knew," her "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was the most damaging blow that slavery ever got up to that time. It showed the curse of human bondage in an unanswerable way that maddened the South as they never had been before. In one place in Southern Mississippi they made a dummy effigy of Mrs. Stowe, and had their negroes hang it where there were several speeches made. Among them was one from a young lawyer who in part said that thus should perish all enemies of the South.

The fugitive slave law of 1850, was the most one-sided spite legislation that has ever been

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

passed by any legislature in this country. It was very damaging in its operation in many places where slavery had a friendly U. S. commissioner.

In the City of Philadelphia two free negroes, a man and a woman, were arrested and taken before a U. S. Commissioner who after reading the evidence of the kidnapper and his partner (the negroes were not allowed to give any evidence) decided that they were his property. They were smuggled on to a boat and run out of the Delaware river and carried to Maryland and then to Virginia where they were sold for one thousand dollars each to a Virginia tobacco planter.

Very truly,  
William D. Kelley.

## CHAPTER XXX

---

### KIDNAPPING THE GOTHARD BOYS.

These boys were born at the Diamond Island in Posey County in about 1820. About the year 1824, Gothard moved his family to a little log cabin a half mile southwest of what is now known as Calvert's chapel, Vanderburg, County. About the year 1825, three men whose names are not known except the leader, named Lynn, stole the boys and took them back to Diamond Island where they were secreted and afterward taken away to Missouri, which created a great commotion in the neighborhood. A party was organized to search for the boys, but they were not successful. The party was headed by Uncle Paddy Calvert. With him were Bob Calvert, Joseph Carter and John Armstrong and two or three others. While they were searching for the boys at Diamond Island the company had a skirmish with the kidnappers with clubs, knives and guns. In the midst of the battle, which was a desperate one from start to finish, Paddy Calvert came near losing his life. The kidnappers got between him and the rest of his party and hemmed him behind a set of hewed logs for a house. In at-

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

tempting to escape he ran his horse over the logs lengthwise. The horse caught his foot between the logs and fell. At that the kidnappers rushed to his relief. His horse got its foot loose or Calvert would have been killed. The rescuing party found there were too many kidnappers for them to contend with so they fell back and returned to their homes. It afterward developed that the boys were hidden in a well near by at the time this battle took place. They were then taken into Missouri and sold into slavery. A few months after that "Grandfather Armstrong" as he was known, and John Armstrong sold out their possessions and moved to what was then called the Red River Country, located in southwestern Arkansas. "Uncle Pady Calvert" and his son Robert went with a four horse team to help them move. On their way home they stopped over night in the neighborhood where the little boys were sold and in talking with the gentleman with whom they stayed all night, they learned that two little mulatto boys were brought there and sold to his neighbors. The next morning Mr. Calvert and his son went to see the gentleman who had bought the boys and asked him to call the boys up one at a time and if they did not know him or his son or both of them, they would not claim them as stolen boys. Ike was called up, but failed to rec-

## KIDNAPPING THE GOTTHARD BOYS

ognize either man. Then Jack was called and he did not know Mr. Calvert but knew his son at once and said—"That's Marsa Bob Calvert." Then the boys both seemed to recollect the two men and recalled their names. The man who had bought them readily gave them up to Mr. Calvert as they were stolen property. He took them home, raised them to manhood sent them to school and gave them an education the same as he did his own children. An agreement was made between Calvert and the Missouri man that the boys were never to go into bondage again. When they were twenty-one years old he gave each of them a good horse, a saddle and bridle, and one hundred dollars apiece and started them out into the world.

## CHAPTER XXXI

---

### THOSE LIVING IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY THAT OWNED SLAVES ATTEMPTED TO HOLD THEM BY MAKING EMANCIPATION AND INDENTURE PAPERS.

Below is given a few specimens of the way the poor, unsuspecting negroes were fooled, being made to believe they were signing their emancipation papers, when in fact, they were signing an indenture that gave the control of their labor for a long period of years to their so-called masters who, in many cases, pretended to be liberating them. Since writing this article it has been thought best to withhold the names of those making these pretended emancipation papers and use fictitious ones, for the reason that many of the descendants are still living and are among the best people of the State who would scorn any such dishonest action.

"On the 27th day of July 1813 I, Joseph Barton, have this day set free my slave, Thomas Turner, and I hereby make and acknowledge the emancipation paper for his complete freedom. The said Thomas Turner for the privilege of being known as a free man, has agreed to indenture his

### ATTEMPT TO HOLD SLAVES

services to me for a period of thirty years from this date.

(Seal)

Joseph Barton

"I, Thomas Turner, do hereby accept the emancipation papers for which I sincerely thank my former master and do cheerfully agree to indenture myself to the said Joseph Barton as per the above agreement.

July 27, 1813.

Thomas Turner.

X My own mark.

On the 30th day of August this generous hearted Joseph Barton sold this negro to a person for five hundred and thirty-five dollars who smuggled him across the Ohio river where he was sold into slavery in the south.

"I, George Endicutt, have decided to emancipate my slave, Job Boyce and I hereby certify that I this day give him his freedom and it affords me the greatest pleasure to bear witness that he has always been an obedient, faithful and honest servant. By an agreement of the said Job Boyce he agrees to indenture himself to me for twenty-three years or until he is sixty years old.

(Seal) August 20, 1813.

George Endicutt.

I, Job Boyce, of my own free will do hereby accept my freedom papers from my former master George Endicutt and have agreed to indenture myself to him for the time specified in the agreement, August 20, 1813.

Job Boyce

X My own mark

(Seal)

Witness James Boswell."

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

"September 26, 1813, I, Noah Freeman, of Indiana Territory, on this date, do hereby emancipate my slave, Mary Ann, to enjoy all the rights of freedom that a negro and an uneducated woman can. It affords me great satisfaction to testify that she has been a most faithful and obedient servant. This paper and her freedom to be in force and effect after the 26th day of September, 1833. Until that time she has indentured her service to me and my family.

Noah Freeman.

I, Mary Ann, the former slave of my master, Noah Freeman, accept my emancipation papers and do agree to faithfully work for my former master and mistress until the 20th day of September, one thousand, eight hundred and thirty-three.

Mary Ann.

X My Mark.

(Seal)

Witness, Jason Brown."

"This is to certify that I, James Hartwell, of my own free will and accord do this day emancipate and give freedom to a negro slave, named Charles Hope, brought by me from North Carolina. In making these papers I want to bear testimony to the painstaking and careful way he has done his work and that he is a quiet and most obedient servant and has always been very easily managed. For these good qualities it affords me great pleasure to be able to give him his rightly earned freedom. For some necessary expenses that has to be incurred before he can leave the home he has so long lived at and for the love he has for me and my family, he hereby agrees to indenture his services to me for twenty-nine years from the 18th of October 1809, which is the date of this agreement.

(Seal)

James Hartwell.

## ATTEMPT TO HOLD SLAVES

I, Charles Hope, do hereby acknowledge my master for the kindness he has shown in setting me free and I cheerfully accept the conditions in my freedom papers and agree to serve the time specified, or until death.

Charles Hope.  
X His mark."

Note the meanness of this hypocrite who made the great show of giving this negro pretended freedom with such a good certificate of character, which would make the negro more saleable when he had an opportunity to sell him and on the fifteenth day of the next November he did sell him to a neighbor for four head of horses, ten head of cattle and one hundred acres of military donation land and a promissory note for three hundred dollars. The next year this negro went with his master down the Wabash river on a pretended trip to the saline country of Illinois, but was carried farther south and sold into slavery for life.

In 1805 the Kukendal family, by their agent Samuel Vannorsdell, had two negroes arrested and were attempting to carry them out of the Territory when Governor Harrison issued a proclamation forbidding their removal, as Vannorsdell did not have the consent of the negroes to remove them. This brought on a spirited law-suit, Governor Harrison and others becoming bondsmen for

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

the negroes. The case went over to the next term of court. At that term the two negroes were produced in court but in the meantime Governor Harrison had indentured one of them for a period of eleven years.

In 1854 the author was visiting a family in an old settled portion of Southern Indiana. During that visit it became known to a young lady of that family that he was gathering data of incidents concerning the early settlers and of anything that would be of interest about "Ye Olden Tymes." This young lady informed him that they had the emancipation and indenture papers of "Old Tom" who was their slave and friend, which papers she thought would be of real worth to one gathering such data. She said she would show the papers and he might copy them provided he would not use their names. This was readily agreed to.

"May 26, 1815. To all whom it may concern.

This is to certify that this day I have set free and by these presents do give emancipation papers to my faithful servant Thomas Agnew and from this date he shall be known as a freeman. Given under my hand and seal.

Thomas Trueman.

(Seal)

Witness, Joseph Forth.

"This is to certify that I have this day received my emancipation papers from my former master. As I don't know any other home but the one I have always lived at, I do hereby indenture

## ATTEMPT TO HOLD SLAVES

myself to my master, John Trueman for thirty years from this date, he agreeing to feed and clothe me during that time.

Thomas Agnew

May 26, 1815.

X His mark."

After the papers were copied this intelligent young lady related this interesting story of Tom's life—

"Just before the state of Indiana was admitted into the Union my father moved here from a slave state and brought with him, Tom, whom he had owned from his infancy. He had no thought that there would be any trouble about it as Tom was a fixture in the family. A friend one day told my father that parties were preparing to bring habeas corpus proceedings and emancipate Tom. The only thing my father could do was to emancipate him and have him indenture his time after he was a freeman. This was done as above shown and Tom went on faithfully with his work as before—this was nearly twenty years before I was born.

"The good old faithful slave worked on the farm with my father for nearly twenty-seven years after the indenture was made, when my father sickened and died. Tom then kept on working with my brother the same as before.

"On settling up the estate, it was found that

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

my father was more in debt than had been supposed and there would be but little left.

"A cousin of my father who lived in a slave state where he had moved from, held a mortgage on our farm. This cousin was a 'Shylock' and demanded the last cent which would take everything, farm and all at a forced sale. He however made this proposition to my mother; that if Tom would go home with him and work for him as long as he lived, he would release the mortgage. This, my mother would not consent to as Tom had less than two years of his indenture term to put in and he was so faithful to the family that she would not listen to such a transaction.

"Tom had learned the condition of things as nothing was kept from him and he had planned with this cousin to give his life service for the family's comfort. He would not consent to anything but that he must go to save the farm and the family from want. The agreement was made, the mortgage was cancelled and Tom went to the home of his new master, now a slave in fact.

"Some time after this an uncle of my mother died and left her several thousand dollars. This made us independent and my mother's first thoughts were of Tom. She went to hunt for him and found him faithfully working away. She went to his master, told him that she wanted to

#### ATTEMPT TO HOLD SLAVES

take Tom back with her and that she was prepared to pay him in full for his mortgage, interest and trouble. This he refused saying that Tom was priceless and that no money could buy him. She tried in every way to have him agree to let Tom go with her but he was obdurate. Tom told her not to mind him, that there would be but a few years more for him to serve as age was creeping on and he would soon be in another country where no trouble could come.

"My mother was a nervy woman and she determined to liberate Tom if it could be done. She was advised to go to Evansville and see a lawyer by the name of Conrad Baker. My mother explained to Mr. Baker Tom's situation and a statement of the evidence that could be obtained. She also gave him the emancipation and indenture papers. Mr. Baker informed her that there was no doubt about Tom being legally freed and that if he could be got into a free state there would be no further need of legal proceedings. It was found that this could not be done so proceedings were brought in the County where Tom was held in slavery, to liberate him. The facts with affidavits to back them up were filed with the case. The Court, after hearing all the evidence, decided that since Tom had been given emancipation papers which made him free and since he had indentured

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

himself for thirty years and had put in over time on that agreement, he was now free.

Tom came back to Indiana with my mother and lived with our family during the rest of his life and when he died we gave him a royal funeral, feeling that we had lost our best friend and one of nature's noblemen."

After Colonel Baker was elected Governor of Indiana, the author wrote him about this case and sent him a copy of the emancipation and indenture papers with a pretty full history of the case. His reply is here given in full:

Executive Office,  
Indianapolis, Ind.,  
Sept. 20, 1870.

Colonel W. M. Cockrum,  
Oakland City, Indiana.

I am in receipt of your letter together with the enclosure of the 15th inst. It affords me great pleasure to say that no case in my whole practice as a lawyer was so gratifying to me as the liberation from bondage of that true-hearted old Nubian, Tom Agnew.

I well recollect the lady, Mrs. Trueman, who was my client in the case. She was so well pleased with the good deed that she had been instrumental in bringing about that she wanted to pay me three or four times my rightful fee.

Very truly,  
Conrad Baker.

## CHAPTER XXXII

---

### A LETTER FROM JOHN T. HANOVER

Freedman's Bureau, Washington,

March, 9, 1865.

Mr. Cockrum at Nashville, Tenn.

My dear Mr. Cockrum:

I certainly do recollect you and was so glad to receive your letter. You have not forgotten the real-estate firm. Your letter was forwarded to me and as you will see my name is changed since you knew me. I recall the incidents at your father's home with pleasure. I was so fearfully sick from the poison of the pesky snake that I thought I should not get over it. Your father and mother were so very kind to me. When you write home I want you to remember me to them and say how I do thank them for their kindness and to Dr. McCullough. How patiently he worked with my hand. I shall always love him. If he is living remember me to him.

I read your army experience with interest and I am so glad you survived the terrible wound and the vile prison.

Most of the young men who were with me in Indiana are in the army. This rotten Confederacy

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

is on its last legs. Soon the old flag of the Union will wave over all of our America, the slaves free and our country will soon gather strength and then make rapid bounds to its destined greatness. I have none of my papers or note book with me but I am willing that you should have one of the diaries or more if you will have copies made and return them to me. I can't say for certain how many fugitive slaves passed through the hands of the men on duty in my district on the Ohio river, but for the seven years more than an average of four thousand each year. The work you did for me was all right and I assure you that I had the utmost confidence in your father. He was a great help to me as he was personally acquainted with all the country that I had charge of. It was risky business. I remember some men who were of help to me and always seemed to do what they did so carefully. I recall the two Mr. Ritchies who lived near your father; Dr. Lewis of Princeton; Mr. Caswell and George Hill of Lynnville. (Mrs. Caswell could bake such good salt rising bread). Dr. Posey was a true man. There will be no more need of filling his coalbank with runaway negroes. If I succeed well, I intend to come once more and go over the routes of my old work. I should like so much to see all the people that I used to know in that country. If you should go to Philadel-

LETTER FROM JOHN HANOVER

phia, go to the old Post—I may be there soon. I will always be glad to see you and talk over these matters again.

Yours as ever,

J. T. Hanover.

## CONTENTS.

	<b>PAGE</b>
CHAPTER I—Organization of the Anti-Slavery League -----	8-28
CHAPTER II—Jerry Sullivan's Raid at the old Don-gola Bridge -----	29-37
CHAPTER III—An Attempt to Catch Runaway Ne-groes, Which ended in a Desperate Battle With Wild Hogs-----	38-43
CHAPTER IV—Ira Caswell Brings Three Negroes to Col. Cockrum's Barn Cellar-----	44-48
CHAPTER V—Slaves Escape While Owners Are in Deep Sleep as a Result of too Much Drinking--	49-54
CHAPTER VI—How Three Runaway Slaves Were Assisted to Freedom by the Underground Rail-road -----	55-59
CHAPTER VII—Kidnappers Kidnapped-----	60-68
CHAPTER VIII—Workings of the Underground Rail-road and Some People Engaged in the Dangerous Work-----	69-74
CHAPTER IX—Crazy Jeff Lewis-----	75-97
CHAPTER X—Ben Swain-----	98-105
CHAPTER XI—Sam Lynn-----	106-120
CHAPTER XII—Slave Hunt to Watch Kirk's Mill Bridge -----	121-127
CHAPTER XIII—George Sturgis-----	128-152
CHAPTER XIV—Dr. John W. Posey and Rev. El-dridge Hopkins Release Kidnapped Negroes-----	153-162
CHAPTER XV—John Bundy, an Employe of the An-ti-Slavery League-----	163-181
CHAPTER XVI—Thomas Jeffries-----	182-193
CHAPTER XVII—John Dole-----	194-217
CHAPTER XVIII—Beecher's View of the Fugitive Slave Law-----	218-223

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER XIX—John and Pete Munday-----	224-229
CHAPTER XX—Rev. Hiram Hunter Releases Kid-napped Negroes-----	230-236
CHAPTER XXI—The Kidnapping of Rube at Princeton, Ind.-----	237-241
CHAPTER XXII—A Bluff That Failed to Work---	242-244
CHAPTER XXIII—Joseph Montgomery Releases Kidnapped Negroes-----	245-247
CHAPTER XXIV—Kidnapping of Steve Hardin---	248-249
CHAPTER XXV—An Attempt to Kidnap a Barber at Petersburg, Ind.-----	250-251
CHAPTER XXVI—Two Negroes Kidnapped West of Princeton, Ind.-----	251-253
CHAPTER XXVII—Job Turner-----	254-264
CHAPTER XXVIII—John Davenport-----	265-276
CHAPTER XXIX—Interesting Letters-----	277-306
CHAPTER XXX—Kidnapping the Gothard Boys--	307-309
CHAPTER XXXI—Emancipation and Indenture Papers -----	310-318
CHAPTER XXXII—A Letter From John T. Hanover, alias John Hansen-----	319-321

## INDEX.

	PAGE
Adams, Dr. J. R.....	250
Adkins, Andrew .....	29
Adkins, Pink.....	67
Allen, Gilp.....	119
A Bluff That Failed to Work.....	242
Attempted Kidnapping of Barber at Petersburg.....	250
Baker, Governor Conrad.....	318
Barrett, John W.....	239
Blackford, Judge.....	219
Beecher, Henry Ward.....	218
Beal, Mr.....	185
Baker, William.....	150
Buckner, Gen. Simon B.....	59-299
Bates, Gen. William B.....	289-59
Booker, Isham.....	67-269
Brooks, Hunter.....	94
Bodin, Esquire.....	112
Bundy, John.....	163-175-178
Brownlow, Senator.....	294
Cullom, Senator.....	277
Carpenter, Willard.....	129
Coffin, Levi.....	21
Crittenden, Gen. T. L.....	27
Caswell, Ira.....	44-58-67-81-89-258
Coleman, Willis.....	44
Turchin, Gen. John B.....	59
Cockrum, Col. J. W.....	69-167-239
Corn, Mr.....	102
Calvert Neighborhood.....	171
Col. J. W. Cockrum's Barn Cellar, Slave Refuge.....	191

## INDEX.

	PAGE
Cockrum, Col. W. M.....	269
Erwin, Thomas.....	56
Ellington, Rev. Mr.....	29
Emancipation and Indenture Papers.....	310
Eastman Family.....	49
Ford, Mr.....	110
Fletcher, Calvin.....	219
Hall, Judge.....	151
Hathaway, John.....	39
Hansen, John.....	52-167-173-265-259
Hill, Geo. W.....	52-67-89-208-269
Hart, Thomas.....	58
Helms, Gen. Benjamin Hardin.....	59
Howland, Capt. Livingston.....	94
Harriman's Ferry.....	119
Hawthorne, Robert.....	133-259-273
Hopkins, Rev. Eldridge.....	158
Hunter, Rev. Hiram, Releases Kidnapped Negroes--	230
Hanover, John T. (alias John Hansen).....	319
Jeffries, Thomas.....	182
Johnson, Gen. Sidney A.....	27
Jones, Lieutenant.....	95
Johnson, Henry.....	98-109
John and Jane.....	139
Jerry, Mr.....	141-145
Jones, Mrs.....	146
Jones, Mr.....	148
Kelley, Hon. Wm. D.....	304
Kinman, Jack.....	61
Knight, Hiram.....	67-269
Kirkman, Joseph J.....	90
Kratz and Heilman.....	123

INDEX.

	PAGE
Kidnapping Rube at Princeton, Ind.....	239
Kidnapping of Steve Hardin.....	248
Kidnapping of Two Free Negroes West of Princeton	252
Kidnapping of Gothard Boys.....	307
Longstreet, Gen.....	301
Lacey, Major.....	21
Lincoln, Abraham.....	59-92
Lewis, Crazy Jeff.....	75
Lynn, Sam.....	106
Lynn, Mr.....	106
Long, Rube.....	147
Lewis, Dr. Andrew.....	150
Morton, Senator.....	281
Medcalf, Tom.....	34-67-263
McDermitt, Mr.....	41
Mason, Dr. Geo. C.....	71
Miller, Gen. John F.....	94
McCullough, Dr. Samuel D.....	132
Mundy, John and Pete.....	224
Montgomery, Joseph, Liberates two Kidnapped Negroes.....	245
Mills, Senator.....	284
Naley, Obadiah.....	134-264
Negro Preacher.....	166
O'Reiley, P. G.....	149
Posey, Dr. John W.....	19-44-74-153-181-259
Palmer, N. B.....	29
Quiggins, Mitch.....	133
Quay, Senator.....	196
Robinson, Judge A. L.....	95
Ray, John.....	99
Stuart, Gen. A. P.....	286

INDEX.

	PAGE
Slave Trader-----	144
Simpson, Wesley-----	133-219
Stormont and Carothers Neighborhood-----	127
Slave Hunt at Kirk's Mill Bridge-----	121
Spradley Neighborhood-----	119
Sullivan, Jerry, Raid-----	29
Simpson, Basil-----	32-82
Stubblefield, Joseph-----	38-180
Street, Isaac-----	42
Stuckey, John-----	67-92-129-263
Swain, Ben-----	98-105
Sheriff, Deputy-----	103
Sturgis, George-----	128-138
Travell, John-----	49
Turner, Job-----	79-164-196-206-254
Taylorsville, now Selvin-----	116
Tennesseean Come to Grief-----	191
Thorp, James and Henry Scales-----	215
Thurston, Dr.-----	274
Turpie, Senator-----	298
Uncle Simon-----	203
Vest, George-----	194
Vorhees, Senator-----	280
Willis, Bev-----	40
Wright's Ferry-----	50
Williams, Mr.-----	169-170
Wick, Judge-----	219
Wade, Senator-----	291

## INDEX OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Col. W. M. Cockrum-----	Frontispiece
Map of the Underground Railroad-----	8
John Hansen-----	17
Old Dongola Bridge-----	32
Ira Caswell-----	48
Runaway Negro-----	64
Dr. John W. Posey-----	80
Dr. Andrew Lewis-----	145
Rev. Eldridge Hopkins-----	160
Jobe Turner-----	176
George W. Hill-----	192
John Dole-----	208
Col. J. W. Cockrum-----	240
Robert P. Hawthorne-----	257
John Davenport-----	273







